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CU Amiga Magazine
PRIORY COURT
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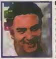
AMIGA MAGAZINE SEPTEMBER 1996

Editorial



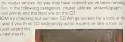
For the latter part of the summer the Amiga software market is holding up much better than anyone expected. Although there have been delays aplenty in recent months, two eagerly-awaited programs have just arrived in and boy have we had fun with them. On the serious side of things OctaMED SoundStudio had Tony Horgan in rave mode for the best part of three weeks. We had to buy him a new set of headphones to try and save our eardrums. On the games side The Killing Grounds finally arrived (it should be in the shops as you read this) and drove me half insane. Late nights testify to its addictivity – and difficulty. TKG takes no prisoners. We're going to have to take a couple of days off to recover from the damage done to his ears and my eyes.

For those of you who have bought the CD-ROM issue of the magazine, welcome. We don't like to boast (well not too much anyway) but this CU Amiga Magazine Super CD-ROM is the best we've done by a long shot. Not only does it contain the brilliant Vista Lite, it is also packed with demos, images, mods and more which will keep you busy for a long time to come. And the icing on the cake has to be the reader entries. As you may have noticed we've been running a competition for reader CD entries in the following categories: music, utilities, artwork/graphics, games and demos. We received plenty and the best are on the CD.

For those not yet using CD ROM try checking out our new CD Amiga section for a look at the variety you are missing out on – and if you think CD technology is too expensive take a look at page 54: the Ultra CD ROM has just upped the stakes at a lower price. See you next month.

Alan Dykes

Alan Dykes, Editor



The Killing Grounds

Cover Story and Features

8 Vista Lite
If you want to create landscapes as backdrops for Workbench, for objects or for games then this is the right place to start.

21 The world of Aminet
With the recent revelation that Aminet (the on-line Amiga resource) is the world's biggest FTP site, we talk to its creator, Urban Muller, about how it got there and where it goes from here.

26 CU talks to Dex and Jonesy
Who are they? Only the hottest properties on the dance remix scene – and they've got there using Amigas. Tony Horgan checks them out

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Super CD-ROM III

8 Vista Lite
This superb landscape rendering program is yours on both disk and CD-ROM

12 Brian Lara
Audiogenic are back with the cricket simulation of a generation. Try out England and Pakistan in this exclusive demo

72 CU Super CD-ROM III
This month's magnificent CD-ROM not only features both of the floppy disk programs, it's also packed with megabytes of programs, mods, images and more

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DISK 140

Vista Lite 3.0

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Vista Lite
Create amazing Landscapes with this full cover disk!
AMIGA MAGAZINE

▲ Vista Lite 3.0 makes it incredibly simple to render scenes like this with little more than a few menu selections and button clicks.

It's all here, complete and fully functioning in all its panoramic glory. Vista Lite 3.0 is yours with this month's CU Amiga Magazine. Now you can render incredibly realistic landscape scenes at the touch of button and let's face it, no Amiga is complete without a 3D landscape generator. Vista Lite 3.0 uses clever combinations of fractal maths and 3D representations of real world locations (Digital Elevation Maps – DEMs for short) to render snowy mountains, woodlands, lakes, rivers, pastures, scree slopes (ask your geography teacher) and little fluffy clouds. It couldn't be easier to use, but if you want to get more involved there's a host of options and parameters that can be tweaked, fine-tuned or cranked up to the max to ensure you get just the results you're after.

▲ This lake was originally a dry crater but one mouse click later and it's been turned into a lake

Hints and tips

When you're dealing with high quality high resolution renders it can be frustrating to find that all your big shot render has gone a bit Pete Tong. The most common problems are things like rock faces and enormous trees appearing right up in the foreground obscuring everything behind them. Here are some tips to help avoid disappointments.

- **Don't put too much faith in low quality renders.** Before starting an ultra quality render it's best to generate a medium quality version. This is normally good enough to let you know if you're looking straight at a lump of rock or if your panorama will be drawn in full.

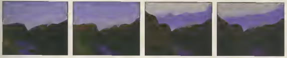
- **Don't place the camera among trees.** The tree line setting is the maximum altitude at which trees will appear, so if you check that the camera's vertical position is above this you'll be okay. Otherwise you might just end up with very good view of a tree and nothing else.

- **Run a screen grabber in the background.** This can be useful if you are using the Show Render option to view the scene as it's rendered. Scenes are rendered from background to foreground, which means that sometimes excellent features are drawn over later in the rendering process. With a screen grabber you can ensure you get a good shot of the picture if the foreground starts to obscure the best bits.

Quality settings

There are four preset render quality modes which can be used a short cut to add or reduce the amount of detail and realism in your scenes. Rendering at lower quality is faster and useful for testing scenes before committing your Amiga to what could be a lengthy high quality rendering session. For example, it can sometimes be tricky to tell if your positioning is just right. A quick render will let you know if you've got a rock face obscuring your view.

Here are four versions of exactly the same scene, rendered with each of the four preset quality settings. Clouds and trees have been activated manually for the last two renders.



▲ **Above: spooky wastelands are just as easy to render as the lush rolling hillsides.**
Left: this tree-lined river valley has been expanded vertically to emphasise the mountain peaks.

Quickstart

Once you have installed Vista Lite onto your hard drive according to the instructions on page 12 (CD users can run the program straight from the disc) you're ready to roll. When the program loads you'll be presented with grey screen split in half. On the right is the main control panel, while the window on the left is blank, awaiting a DEM file. The first thing to do is load a DEM from the hard drive or CD. Select Load Dem from the Load menu and then choose any .dem file from within the DEM drawer. Click Load DEM to confirm your selection.

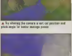
You'll see that the window on the left is now filled with a splodgy kind of pattern. This is the DEM file, a kind of relief map of the area to be rendered. Green represents low lying areas, brown is intermediate and grey and white are areas of high altitude. The camera (your vantage point) will initially be situated at the top of the map looking down (south). The visible area is indicated by the two lines extending from the camera blip. You can move the camera to any other point on the map by first clicking the Camera button from the control panel and then click on its new destination on the map. The target defines the direction of the camera and can also be moved as with the camera, this time clicking the Target button first.

Now hit the Render button at the bottom of the control panel. After a few seconds you'll see a very crude representation of the landscape drawn out as if it were made from large flat triangles. While this looks totally unrealistic it's a quick way of testing out new maps and vantage points. You can re-render the scene at various levels of detail by making changes from the control panel, but the quickest method is to select a new setting from the Quality menu.

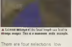
Continued overleaf ▶ ▶ ▶

Upgrade now

In order to get the most from Vista Lite 3.0 you can order the full instruction manual which details all of the program's features. You might also like to take a look at GeoMorph (brings your landscapes to life) and Vista Lite's big brother Vista Pro. See page 14 for details



▲ Try altering the camera's vertical position and pitch angle for better vantage points



▲ Extreme settings of the focal length can lead to strange images. This is a maximum wide example.

There are four selections, low, medium, high and ultra, and each takes longer to render than the one before. The other factor in the quality is the screen mode. From the Screen Mode menu you can select the resolution and amount of colours. If you want to watch the scene being drawn, select Show Render also (this will increase rendering times).

If you're happy with your camera position, select High or Ultra from the Quality menu and click on the clouds and one of the tree type buttons from the control panel. Now hit Render once again and put the kettle on or something. This time it will take a lot longer to render the scene but the result will be far more impressive. There's a progress monitor in the panel at the bottom of the screen. The Render counter goes up to 128 before it cleans up the render and displays it properly.

To save the picture to disk select Save IFF from the Save menu, select your destination and filename then click Save IFF to write it to disk.

Control panel

The control panel isn't really as complex as it looks once you know your way around it. Here's a quick tour of what's on offer:

1 Target position The three figures beneath the Target button display the target position. This can be altered by clicking on the map or entering new values in the boxes.

2. Camera position Works just like the Target controls.

3 Distance These specify the distance between the camera and the target ('dr' is the distance directly).

4 Camera orientation These set the camera's angles of rotation through 360 degrees in three axes: bank, heading and pitch.

5 Sea level This is maximum altitude of any sea that is rendered.

6 Tree line In natural environments trees tend to grow up to a certain altitude and then stop abruptly. This sets the maximum altitude at which they will be rendered.

7 Snow line This is the minimum altitude at which snow will lie on the ground.

8 Haze density Use this to create anything from thick fog to a subtle haze effect.

9 Natural features You can activate one of four types of tree, clouds and stars from these buttons. The River and Lake buttons require you to click on the map to specify where you want the water to appear. Vista Lite will ask you to confirm or alter the chosen altitude and is then intelligent enough to flow the water over any adjoining land lower than the specified source.

10 Tree density Higher figures in this box lead to more dense woodland, with low numbers leading to just a sprinkling of trees.

11 Focal length The Wide and Zoom buttons can be used as short cuts to alter the value. Possible values range from 1 to 100. Watch the lines extending from the camera on the map to see how this changes the view.

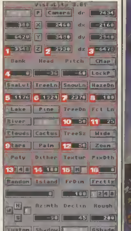
12 Tree size Alter the size of the trees by changing this value.

13 Polygons You can specify the amount of polygons that will make up your landscape from here. Higher settings make for smaller polygons and more of them, leading to smoother and more realistic hills (and longer rendering times).

14 Dither. Alter the amount of dithering used in the image by changing this value.

15 Texture Four different types of texturing techniques are available. Try out each of them on a simple scene rendered at medium or high quality.

16 Pixel depth.



Animation

Why not go one better and create a whole animated fly-by animation of your 3D world. It's a piece of cake: set a sequence of frames that move through your landscape and [illegible] into an animation. With a camera position and target set, select Generate [illegible] the Script [illegible] menu [illegible] for your script (the movement sequence which [illegible] a guide for [illegible] and then select Execute from the same menu once again [illegible] a filename for your animation [illegible] use the Preview option to test out the flight path in either 2D or wire-frame 3D.

Vista Lite does not detect whether the camera has passed through a landscape so at times you will need to adjust the settings by hand to avoid the camera ducking beneath the ground. You'll normally be able to tell if this is going to happen by running a 3D preview. It's also worth picking a route across your landscape that doesn't show the edges dropping off into the inky blue void that surrounds it.

The resulting file is in a special VAnim format. To view it you need to load the Viewer program found in the Vista Lite 3.0 drawer. Select your VAnim from the file requester and it will play automatically. Alternatively you can output single frames.

Tony Horgan

▲ Any Vista Lite DEM file can be rendered as a snowy mountain scene by merely selecting a winter scenes and lowering the snowline value.

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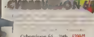

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cover disks
Games demos

Capital Punishment

Warning! Parental advisary: Capital Punishment contains scenes of violence and partial nudity. This demo is not recommended for children under 15.

Capital Punishment, from Canadian company Click Boom, is a beat 'em up with amazing special fighting effects.

Because of its violent nature and a partially disrobed character it is not available directly via Workbench like all other programs on this CD-ROM. To run the demo you must boot your Amiga/CD32 with the Super CD-ROM III in your CD-ROM drive while holding down the left mouse button. This bypasses workbench and brings you straight into the demo. It also ensures that you do not inadvertently start the demo while looking for something else.

If you intend to boot with no startup sequence for another reason, make sure that Super CD-ROM III is NOT in your drive when holding down the left mouse button or you will go straight to Capital Punishment and have to start all over again.

Here's a couple of hints for playing it:

1. Find the moves first in two player mode. As you may notice we haven't printed any controls: we shouldn't have to. It's a beat 'em up.

2. Turn the sound up. The SFX and music are moody and brilliant.

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Brian Lara Cricket '96

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141
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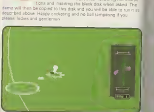
Disk number 141. Brian Lara Cricket '96 could not be easier to load. Simply make sure that the disk is write protected (the black tab in the top left/right hand corner is clicked upwards leaving the hole exposed) then insert the disk into your Amiga and turn on the power supply. The demo takes about a minute to load, after which you will get a selection screen for England and Pakistan. You can use joystick and mouse. Choose who you want to be and the game will start. Then select your team and your sort.

When bowling, push your joystick forward and back, left and right to position the moving white line in front of the batsman, which places your ball. Then wiggle the joystick left/right to increase the power of the shot. When batting you can position your man right up as the bowler bowls. Then it's a matter of using the right direction on the joystick and timing your fire button correctly. Fielding? Well, you just run after the ball with your nearest fielder. To return the ball to the bottom wicket keeper pull down on your joystick and press fire; to return to the top keeper press up and fire.

CUCD3: Brian Lara Cricket '96 is also on the CD in the Brian Lara drawer. This demo has been designed to run from floppy disk so you will have to dearchive it onto one to get it running. To do so have a blank formatted disk to hand. Double click on the icon in the Brian Lara folder to start the process, following the instructions and inserting the blank disk when asked. The demo will then be copied to this disk and you will be able to run it as described above. Happy cricketing and no ball tampering if you please, ladies and gentlemen.



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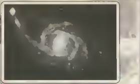

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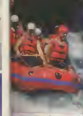

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News

New Generation Graphics Board

Phase 5 [illegible] that they [illegible] release [illegible] generation CyberVision graphics board for big [illegible] Amigas called the CyberVision [illegible] compatible [illegible] three expansion [illegible] the board is designed [illegible] A2000, 3000 and 4000 but also in the new tower systems available from [illegible] German suppliers.

Featuring [illegible] new graphics chip [illegible] the boards will be able to handle more complicated graphics and rendering than the current model.

Phase 5 are saying that it will be available with modular upgrade capability so that you can buy a [illegible] expanded [illegible] capabilities according to your budget. Options for the expanded version [illegible] Video RAM, a scandoubler switch and an MPEG decoder.

Prices are currently quoted as ranging from DM 449 (£215) for the basic unit with 2Mb Video RAM to DM1047 (£500) for a 4Mb unit with Scandoubler and MPEG.

phase 5
DIGITAL PRODUCTS

Escom Problems Escalate

[illegible] that the Amiga has been [illegible] Apparently the [illegible] DM180m [illegible]

Escom [illegible] from the [illegible] the rest of the [illegible] remains in the balance.

One result of the Amiga [illegible] sale and the closure of the Escom stores though is that [illegible] now seem more [illegible] in taking Amiga.

Escom opened the stores in Britain keen to start a price war [illegible] in the high street but the policy now seems to have backfired much to the delight of other chains. Even in Germany things are not going so well and management quote stock depreciation as one of the biggest difficulties on the balance sheet. They are currently restructuring the company but without, as we all know, the Amiga. See page 19 for more on the VIScorp takeover.

Blizzard Goes Green

Phase 5 are once again innovating with the announcement that they are launching a Blizzard 1240 for Tower A1200s which will be available for under £300 providing quite a performance punch for the pound.

The 1240 will be based on recycled 40MHz 68040 chips. The board will only be available for Tower systems because the chips operate at considerable temperatures and need fan cooling. Tower systems using the board will be similar in specification to the new Eagle 1200 Tower which uses the same chip.

▲ Phase 5 [illegible] to release a Blizzard 1240 for the Tower A1200 for under £300!

Phase 5 are still confident about releasing a new AmigaOS compatible PowerPC based computers by next year. And their PowerUP project (PowerPC accelerator boards for current Amigas) continues, with product expected at the end of the summer for developers.

However they still do not appear to have made any reconciliation approach to Amiga Technologies or VIScorp after criticising AT and the pace of the takeover. Considering last month's legal announcement by the Amiga's new owners maybe this go it alone approach by Phase 5 is destined to change soon.

Shock Waves

A Manchester company have announced plans to ship in an American games accessory for sale in the UK. The Aura Interactor is intended to enhance the gaming experience by providing players with feeling as well as sight and sound.

The device has been developed as a by-product of Star Wars technology designed to reduce vibrations, but reverses the concept and creates them instead. It involves amplifying the bass signals from a game and sending them through an output source – in this case a bone shaking back pack. It can be used for films as well, to give you a feeling of being part of the action or even with music to give you a sense of actually standing beside one of those horrifying body-shaking bass bins at night clubs. In the interests of science we will be testing one next month!

Instruction MANUAL
AURA
INTERACTOR

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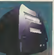
Alternative Rugby League

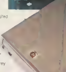
With [illegible] the [illegible] League Sky TV are making a big bid for the [illegible] as far as Rugby League is concerned Us southerners [illegible] the game (like we do Tetleys and other water weak brews [illegible] loses its amateur status the two games are probably destined to become more alike And so the licenced Super League [illegible] alternative have just announced could be good practice [illegible] I figure out why the scrums are so small and what [illegible] shoulder pads are worn for It should be previewable ne[illegible] meantime check out the PC grabs below

Competition Winners

Over the last few months we've run some storming competitions Sadly for one the object has been discontinued We speak of course about the Walker now overtaken by VIScorp and other events Nevertheless the competition generated a massive response and the winning entries (winning an Amiga each remember) are as follows The answers to the questions and winners of the Q Drive and the Pinball Madness competitions are also included



Walker
1st Prize The Amiga Millennium
"The next Generation Amiga should take the technology into the next century"
Tony Fryer Caverham Somerset
2nd Prize The Elite – A cut above the rest just like the game of the same name
Robert Gaudy Warrington, Cheshire



Q-Drive
1 The headquarters of Amiga Technologies is in Bensheim
2 The Amiga Internet package is called The Surfer
3 The Average capacity of a CD is 650Mb
Nigel Simpson, Norwich

Pinball
1 The table is Night of Demons
2 The company was Liquid Dezign
3 Sorry folks although Roger Daltrey sang it Pete Townsend wrote it
The winners with all answers correct are
MR Usher
Stockport
Adrian Gramm,
Kettering
Brendan White
Tubbercurry Ireland
Kevin Coady,
Mablethorope, Lincs
Paul Smith,
Welwyn Garden City

VIScorp GmbH Gets Go-Ahead

Despite an official fax from Petro Tystchschenko at the end of last month confirming VIScorp's purchase of Amiga Technologies it appears that as far as the Americans were concerned the deal didn't go through until July 19 according to a document called An Open Message To The Amiga Community by Bill Buck VIScorp's CEO released on July 24 It stated that the delays had been due to the bankruptcy of Escom AG (reported on page 17) and Amiga Technologies

VIScorp have been in negotiations with "at least 11 different [illegible] that had [illegible] owners of the technology and or the inventory which is why they claim not much has been said up until now

From the statement it seems that Amiga Technologies GmbH is being scrapped completely and replaced by VIScorp GmbH a process that will take at least a month Mr Tyschtschenko will remain as General Manager jointly with the VIScorp placed Requel Velasco They are currently looking for a distribution manager in Europe and are promising slow but steady progress

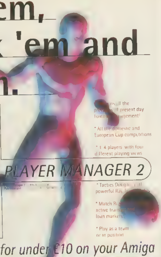
▲ Although Amiga Technologies GmbH will no longer exist, Petro Tyschtschenko (left) will continue to jointly manage the new VIScorp GmbH, according to a statement released by Bill Buck (right) on July 24. The new company is now looking for a European sales and marketing manager for Amiga

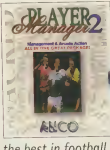
Amiga Top 10

Supplied by HMV

1	Sensi World Of Soccer Euro 96	Warner
2	Kick Off 96	Anco
3	Premier Manager 3 Deluxe	Gremlin
4	Worms	Ocean
5	Ultimate Soccer Manager	Sierra
6	Super Skidmarks	Guildhall
7	Sensible Golf	Virgin
8	Football Glory	Hit Squad
9	Xtreme Racing	Guildhall
10	Super Skidmarks	Guildhall

Book 'em, sack 'em and sell 'em.

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Aminet:

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AMINET SET 1
the world's largest Amiga software collection

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the world's largest Amiga software collection

AMINET SET 3
including full versions of Imagine 4.0, XiPaint 3.2, Octamed 5 and some commercial games

▲ The Aminet Set collection, the definitive archive of freely distributable Amiga software.

It's true. Aminet is home to more freely distributable software than any other archive for any platform. This is one area in which the PC world cannot touch the Amiga scene – because, despite the total global domination of the machine, there really isn't a PC scene as such, at least not anything that compares to the community of Amiga users.

When the concept of public domain software took off soon after the launch of the Amiga, I seemed to spend day after day trying to explain to non-Amiga users exactly why someone had created this amazing demo/game/utility but expected no payment in return. These attempts were mostly futile – let's face it, life does n't lead us to expect something for nothing. It's only with the rise of shareware as a means of selling commercial software that the rest of the world has got any kind of a grip on the whole thing, so long as there's an underlying motive, some promise of cash at the end of the freely distributable rainbow. That's mainly what has held back the PD scene on other platforms, while the Amiga's has flourished and developed year after year. Distribution of this software was, and still is, split between bulletin boards, Internet WWW and FTP sites, floppy disks and more recently CD-ROM compilations. However until Aminet there was no single definitive source for freely distributable Amiga software, although Fred Fish had a good crack at it with his vast Fish Disk series.

Enter Aminet

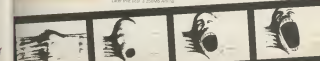
To get to the bottom of the Aminet story you need to go back to January 1992. Amiga enthusiast Urban Muller took over the running of a small archive at a local students' club in his native Switzerland. It was called amiga physik and was handled by a 50MHz 68030 Amiga, stored on a 50Mb hard drive, a machine donated by the Swiss arm of Commodore (remember them?). Urban was surprised at the amount of people that regularly logged onto the archive, around 40 each day, and decided it was worth turning into something more substantial. He developed a system that would generate a list of all the latest uploads (the 'Recent' list) and also a brief text file for each upload detailing its size, who supplied it and so on (the 'Short' file).

Later that year a 250Mb Amiga archive called ab20 was shut d[illegible]t demand for on line Amiga [illegible] stripped the supply. Many turned to amiga physik as the next best a[illegible] but there were too many people [illegible] access this one relatively small archive. Urban appealed for help through the #amiga channel of the IRC (Internet Relay Chat) and Peter Sjostrom offered to run a mirror of the original site. This meant that users could access either site, the contents of which would be exchanged (mirrored) every day. Th[illegible]

Get it on CD too

Even if you don't have a modem or Internet access you can still reap the benefits of Aminet via the regular CD-ROMs (available from most PD houses). These are now compiled every couple of months from all the latest software that has been uploaded to the archive. The first Aminet CD was dated March 1994 and the next CD off the blocks will be Volume 13 dated August 96. You'll remember we kicked off our cover CD series with a disc based on Aminet 7 – a tough act to follow! In addition to the bi-monthly CDs, a quarterly series of Aminet Set packs are released, made up of four CDs of software. With a collection of Aminet CDs to hand you have a world of Amiga software at your fingertips.

▼ Classic demos like Jesus on Es used the Aminet for worldwide distribution, as do the current crop of demos.



Try it for yourself and see

Anyone can use the Aminet archive from anywhere in the world for the price of a local phone call (or for free if you have access to a direct Internet connection). If you don't yet have Internet access, check out our Comms Bible and cover disks which came free with the June 1996 issue of CU Amiga Magazine and call Internet FCI on 01273 763000 who can provide UK residents all they need to get on the Net.

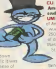
Now you're connected, point your FTP client software at one of the following Aminet mirrors. Some countries have more than one mirror. A full list can be obtained from the ReadMe document on any Aminet CD or from these on-line Aminet archives

Location	Name	IP Address	Path	Files
UK	sunsite.doc.ic.ac.uk	155 198 1 40	pub/aminet/	all
USA (MO)	ftp.wustl.edu	128 252135.4	pub/aminet/	all
Australia	ftp.livewire.com.au	203.18 26.3	pub/aminet/	all
Italy	ftp.unina.it	152 132 34 17	pub/aminet/	all
Scandinavia	ftp.luth.se	130 240 18 2	pub/aminet/	25,000
Switzerland	ftp.eunet.ch	146 228.10 18	pub/aminet/	22,000
Germany	ftp.uni-paderborn.de	131 234 2 42	pub/aminet/	all
Austria	ftp.giga.or.at	131.130 12.66	pub/aminet/	500
France	ftp.grolier.fr	194 51.174 67	pub/aminet/	all
Denmark	sunsite.auc.dk	130 226 51 30	cd aminet	2,000
Portugal	ftp.ua.pt	193 136.80 68	pub/aminet/	8,000
Spain	ftp.gui.uva.es	157 88 36 190	pub/aminet/	1,000

reducing the demands of the Swiss archive. It was then, in May '92, that amiga.physik officially became Aminet.

Next came a 1.5Gb hard drive to expand the amount of available software, and gradually more offers came in from people around the world who were willing to maintain mirrors of the site. Once that snowball had started rolling, with more downloads leading to more uploads, Aminet was up and running.

It was all going well until the university which housed the amiga.physik archive demanded it was shut down due to the large amount of traffic it was attracting (that's traffic in the sense of people accessing the site, not tourists driving past to get a glimpse of it). Closing it down was not an option for those involved, so it was moved to a system maintained by Chris Myers in the USA.



Since then this has been the home of Aminet, from which all the mirror sites are derived. The whole thing is now generally operated by Urban Muller over the Internet from Switzerland. We spoke to him to find out more.

CU How is the source Aminet archived stored and maintained?

UM Currently the master copy of Aminet is located at wuarchive.wustl.edu. This is a 250MHz DEC Alpha with 60Gb of disk space (located at Washington University in St Louis) of which Aminet uses 8Gb. One 9Gb drive was donated to the maintainers of wuarchive by Aminet as well as close to a dozen drives to other mirrors.

CU Does Aminet take up a lot of your time?

UM When I'm working on Aminet CDs it's a full time job. In between those I can do other things at the same time.

CU What are the the advantages for you?

UM. First of all, I have the same advantage as all users of Aminet: a huge, single collection of easy to find Amiga software. That's why I started it. Financially, the work on Aminet itself has been unpaid from the beginning, however later my work on the CDs compensated for that.

CU What are the advantages for those who upload software?

UM Same thing again, since every uploader is a downloader as well, he or she gets a large collection of other Amiga software thanks to other uploaders. Additionally, they make sure that their software gets spread around to lots and lots of other Amiga users who appreciate their work and, in the case of shareware, may pay for it. Finally, authors of uploaded software currently can get a free Aminet CD (send HELP to aminet-server@aminet.org) but this policy will be more restrictive starting with CD 14.

CU How exactly should we pronounce 'Aminet'?

UM I don't really know. In German (I'm Swiss, this is my native language) it's 'Ah-mee-net' (with the Ah as in father, just like the way we pronounce Amiga) but when the discussion on how to pronounce it in English first came up, it turned out that most English speaking people pronounce it 'Amy-net', so I'd declare that official. On CD 12 I used some empty space to add a sample with the correct pronunciation.

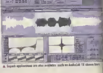
CU Aminet has been very important in the survival of the Amiga scene since the demise of Commodore, has it not?

UM I agree. Aminet couldn't do without the masses of freely distributable software for the Amiga, and those masses couldn't be distributed reasonably without something like Aminet. The PD scene on the Amiga is now self sustaining.

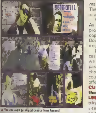
CU Why do you think the Amiga has such a unique varied and vibrant shareware scene (unlike any other platform)?

> **“ Work on Aminet itself has been unpaid from the beginning, however later my work on the CDs compensated for that. ”**
>
> **Urban Müller**

▲ Aminet stores thousands of pictures like the Real 3D render.



▲ Superb applications are also available, such as AudioLab 16 shown here



▲ You can even get digital comics from Aminet!

UM Amiga users are a special crowd. They're more technically interested and maybe more educated. But what really makes them write all that wonderful software is, in my opinion, one thing: a sense of community. Everyone finds himself using dozens of free programs written by other Amiga users and tries to compensate them for that by using his own skills. With software distribution so easy today I really wonder why all the other platforms are so far behind in terms of freely distributable software.

CU What are the criteria for uploads which are allowed onto the Aminet? Are there certain rules which must be followed (eg. proof of copyright ownership, offensive material etc)?

UM We do not rate quality. Tastes differ: whatever we dislike is almost certain to find users among the many, many potential downloaders. Therefore, everything that's legal is accepted.

We are very strict with legality though. As soon as there is a hint of a copyright problem (for example in mods covering a copyrighted song) the upload is removed. Doubtful material is not worth risking the existence of Aminet.

Proof of copyright ownership in every case is practically impossible. However, we've had almost no pirate uploads in the past, and any that slipped through our checks were reported to us quickly so we could remove them. Same goes with offensive material and viruses.

CU Are you seeing an increase in the number of Aminet uploads?

UM: The number of uploads has stabilised on a high level. However the size of uploads is constantly increasing so the total stream of bytes is growing all the time.

CU Some have criticised Aminet CDs for making a profit from the good will of those who upload software to Aminet.

UM Aminet is a free distribution service that uploaders may or may not want to use. Many uploaders are making a profit from that themselves (shareware, commercial demos) so they certainly won't have a problem with us getting paid for our efforts. Freeware authors are

▲ Many artists use Aminet as a test bed for their work. Some are more original than others of course: you'll find plenty of renders taken from stock Star Trek and Deep Space Nine objects but also plenty of highly original creations.

> **“I really wonder why all the other platforms are so far behind in terms of freely distributable software.”**
>
> **Urban Müller**

compensated by getting a large, accessible (we pay for disks) and well-organised archive that they would not be getting if everything were unpaid. If anyone has a problem with our paid work on the CDs they can exclude their uploads from the CD using a special header in the readme, but still use Aminet for distribution.

CU How big do you think Aminet will get?

UM Currently we have 31700 uploads (July 18) which use up 6.2Gb of diskspace. Where it's going to end? No idea. There's not the slightest hint that it's going to. ■

Tony Horgan

Types of 'PD'

Many users of freely distributable (FD) software mix up the terms used. Aminet accepts all of the types listed below, however in the cases of restricted programs they would like to see them marked as such in the description. So, here are the various types

Public Domain (PD) - The author of the software places no restrictions on the use of the program. You can even resell it. The term PD is often misused to mean all types of FD software

Freeware - Free of charge, but the author retains all rights to the software

Gnu Public License (GPL) - Free of charge, but must always be distributed with source so others can modify it

Shareware - Distribution is free, but continued use costs money

Giftware, Cardware - Like shareware, but the author asks for a gift or postcard in case of continued use

Crippleware - Crippled shareware. The program is not fully usable until you register it, it could for example have nerve-racking requesters all over.

Demos - Heavily restricted versions of commercial software. An example would be a paint program without a save function

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Meet the boys who have turned the dance music scene on its head and taken on the biggest names in the business, armed with two Amigas and a copy of ProTracker.

It's cheesy grins all round for the new dynamic duo of dance music ▶

Dex & Jonesey

They're currently the hottest property in dance music. They've had two consecutive number one placings in the Record Mirror Dance Chart. The biggest names in the business are queuing up to have this pair of Dartford DJs work their magic and give them a credible cross-over remix that will ensure radio and club air play right across Europe. They're Dex and Jonesey and they've achieved all of this with a couple of Amigas and copy of ProTracker. This is their story so far.

Anyone into the dance music scene can't fail to have heard Josh Wink's Higher State of Consciousness. Originally released on the New York label Strictly Rhythm, it became a club classic with a three pronged attack consisting of a funky breakbeat, a massive drop out with a snare drum build up and an ear syringing acid line. Limited supplies of the original import release lead to it being re-released for mass UK consumption on Manifesto Records [illegible] caused [illegible] out [illegible]. It was massive all over again, was voted Best Dance Record of the year in all the papers, but even then the demand for it [illegible] Manifesto decided to satisfy the market with another re-release. Manifesto boss and major league DJ Judge Jules had taken care of the previous remix but now there was the question of who [illegible] put on the case for the new remixes. This is where Dex and Jonesey enter the picture.

> “We had a lot of knock-backs at times but we kept going.”

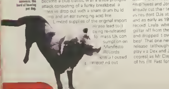
Bangin'

Dex (Andrew McEntry, former Silica employee) and Jonesey (Kevin Tewsi) had already cut their teeth on the dance scene as resident DJs at Dartford's Zen nightclub and as early as 1993 made their first record, Layla, which sampled the classic guitar riff from the Eric Clapton original and dropped it over a funky house back beat. That one never made it to an official release (although it sneaked a bit of club play via Dex and Jonesey's personal copies) as Mr Clapton objected to the use of his riff. Fast forward a couple of years to November 95 and the boys got their first track, the aptly titled The Beginning, released on Bang International Records, a label run by none other than Judge Jules. This paved the way for a remix of Disco's Revenge by Gusto, which Jules released on his other label Manifesto. By now the collective foot of Dex and Jonesey was well and truly wedged in the industry door.

When they heard Higher State of Consciousness was due for a re-release

The studio in full

Amiga 1200 (2Mb)
Amiga 500 (1Mb)
Amitek external disk drive
1 TV set
2 x Tandy SSM 2200 4 channel mixers
GVP DSS8+ sampler
Protracker 2.2
Yamaha PSR 4800 home keybo
Sony DTC690 DAT machine
Novelty bicycle horn/dinner bell



▼ Blissfully unaware, the hard of hearing pet dog.

Dex & Jonesey - Discography

Original productions
Layla (never released)
The Beginning
Chariots of Fire
The Anthem

Remixes
Gusto – Drace's Revenge
Wink – Higher State of Consciousness
David Morales – In De Ghetto
That Kid Chris – Feel The Vibe
Tall & Handsome – Outrage
United Nations of House – Rocky
Wildchild – Jump to the Beat

Additional remix work forthcoming on Positiva, Perfecto, Hooj Choons, Polydor and Manifesto labels.

they knocked up their own remix on spec and packed it off to Jules. He liked it so much he commissioned two additional mixes from them, so the promotional pre-release copies actually contained three heaving Dex and Jonesey mixes, universally awarded the ultimate club accolade of Bargin by all the top names on the scene. In fact, tastemaker and general dance music figurehead Pete Tong has hailed their main remix as the best of the year, if not the 90s and quite possibly one of the best remixes ever! Now there's something to put on your CV.

True grit

At the time of writing they hold both the number one and number seven slots on the DJ Magazine DJ Dance Chart with remixes of Higher State and Dave Morales In Da Ghetto. With a string of other remixes all signed, mastered and ready for release over the next couple of months and even bigger projects lined up for big labels such as Perfecto, Positiva, Hooj Choons and Polydor, things are looking rosy for the pair. So how are they handling their apparent overnight success?

Jonesey At the moment we've got this remix thing to do. It'll probably earn us a lot of money. We've got to do it. I'm not turning that down. Everyone else goes through it, the Todd Terry syndrome, there's lots of other remixers who do it so I don't see why we should miss the boat.

Dex. We knew we eventually we'd make it. We had a lot of knock backs at times but we kept going.

Jonesey You keep plugging away.

Dex If we'd have given up a couple of years ago after a couple of knock backs we'd have probably ended up doing something else. He'd have done his photography, I'd still be selling computers.

But does the rest of the record industry take you seriously if they knew you're using less than a £1,000 worth of equipment when their studios cost much more?

Dex. Do[illegible] home equip[illegible] you're using a bi[illegible]

Jonesey But we [illegible]

Dex "No, we d[illegible] that we use Amiga[illegible]

Dex: "Obviously he[illegible] pay any studio cos[illegible] say 'Here's our fee and here[illegible] costs' and a lot of pe[illegible] don't be able to charge th[illegible] then, and we're like 'no'. If they don't want to pay we're not doing the mix. It shouldn't make any difference at all."

Jonesey: "We've had three deals since then and they've all been good earners."

Dex "John, our manager, he's put our rate up. If they try to barter below that he's really good."

Jonesey: "He's been in the business ten years, he's knows what their budgets are and he says to us 'I know what they pay everyone else, why can't you have that money too?'"

Dex "He knows we'll get a lot of work through Wink. He knows if he turns one down, it won't mean there'll be no more work, there's going to be a lot coming in."

> **"Pete Tong has hailed their main remix as the best of the year."**

So exactly how are these tracks put together with such a basic system?

Dex "We always put the beat and the cymbals on the A500, which is handy as we haven't got enough memory on there for anything but little samples.

So you run each Amiga through its own mixer and use the treble and bass controls to clean up the drums?

Jonesey Yeah, always. It gives it that raucous sound.

You monitor your mixes through those little Zydec speakers?

Jonesey Yes, but what I do is take it back to my home system or Dex's one and try it there too."

Dex: "We try it in different places, on his system, in the car... If you do it everywhere and they all sound good then you're all right. When we do parties I've got my big speakers and we use those for DJ monitors and we've blown the tweeters – you can see they're a bit brown on the top!

"We've been in so many big studios but the quality of the stuff we can do here is so much better because you need an engineer to go around with you there – we know the exact sound we want and we know how to do it here.

Jonesey We went to Mike Stock's (formerly of the Stock, Aitken and Waterman production trio) and it's the best studio you've ever seen. We went in there and we were like 'What do we do?' Where as it's like hands on here and you get a beat and it's brilliant, you have to go through, say, 17 channels and 15 gates just to get the sound. I'm dreading upgrading to Cubase and getting an Akai.

We do use a little production studio and that's really easy to use. We had to do the Char[illegible] project [illegible] tha[illegible]

Dex Jules was [illegible] fussy, he wanted a piano intro.

Jonesey: "But he was happy with the mix and he's signed it now so it was worth it."

Novelty horn

Every studio, no matter how small, needs a secret weapon – some kind of device that makes a unique sound which should really remain a secret from the rest of the recording industry. Dex and Jonesey used theirs on the remix of In Da Ghetto. When they took it to Manifesto, Jules is reported to have exclaimed "What's that noise? It's the best horn I've ever heard – it's brilliant!" In fact it's a novelty bicycle horn (like you might have had on your Chopper) which doubles as Dex's dinner bell. It's attached to a button in the kitchen which his mum rings when his egg and chips are ready. With its three types of siren this little toy apparently sends the dancefloor haywire.

This is a prime example of making the best of what you've got, letting imagination overcome the limitations of a technically basic studio. Pick up any of their remixes and see if you can spot which mixes were made with ProTracker and which came from the studios of the big name producers on the circuit. It won't be hard. It's nothing to do with sound quality, you'll know because the Dex & Jonesey mix is the one you'll crank up to number 10!

These boys are motoring on to a bright future against all the odds, fuelled by talent, self belief, grit, determination to succeed... and the Amiga. They're doing it their own way and if you really want to, you could too. They're living proof of that. ■

Tony Horgan

Thanks to ...

Dex and Jonesey would like to thank Judge Jules at Manifesto Records and John Cecchini at Red Parrot Management for all their help. All enquiries about Dex and Jonesey should be directed to John Cecchini on 0171 736 9679

▼ Two Amigas, one TV and a load of enthusiasm: the studio.

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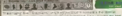

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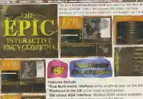

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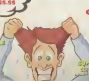

Screen Scene

The arrival of The Killing Grounds this month and an opportunity to exclusively check out the next version of Amiga Worms has meant that we've seen very little of Alan. The other gaming delight is of course Brian Lara Cricket and, yet again, Championship Manager 2 and The Chaos Engine 2 have been delayed (despite the latter being reviewed in half-finished form in another magazine). Here's to next month!

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Worms:

The Next Generation

■ **Due: Before Winter** ■ **Developer: Andy Davidson** ■ **Publisher: Team 17 ✆ 01924 267776**

The Amiga version of Worms was always the best – now it's getting even better. We entered the twilight zone for a sneak preview.

Bournemouth is many things. It's a beautiful town (on a sunny day anyway), a haven for retirees and a Mecca for south coast sun seekers and wind surfers but it has a darker side too. On the outskirts of town lurks a black-eyed idol, a symbol of terror for young children, a nightmare in stone. The concrete donkey.

For those not aware of the history of *Worms*, I must tell you that the concrete donkey has an almost mystical significance. Andy Davidson, the game's creator, has invested considerable time telling anyone who will listen that it was the bad childhood dreams this creature made him have that inspired the game. He claims he's emotionally scarred; he claims that its black eyes are evil – yet on a sunny day at the south coast the donkey in question looks no more evil than a Noddy garden gnome. It stands two feet tall and carries flowers on its back. "You wouldn't think it so innocent if you were two feet tall. I was only a child," claims Andy in a sulk.

Anyway, to keep him happy we've published the exclusive picture of the concrete donkey you see on these very pages. So now you know. And hey, what price fame and fortune, eh?

Super colours

The new version of *Worms* will only work on AGA Amigas – that's A1200 and A4000. This has allowed Andy Davidson to fulfil his wildest dreams: there are more colours and with 2Mb as standard more special features and weapons can be bolted on.

Both he and Team 17 wanted to make it quite clear, though, that this is NOT Worms 2. Worms 2 is a project which is being developed long term for, as Andy slyly puts it, "all formats still viable at the end of next year." That game is scheduled for a Christmas 1997 release and will be a complete overhaul. This Amiga version is more like Worms 1.5. "I am testing some of the weapons out in this version that will no doubt appear in Worms 2, but what I'm trying to do here is make the best Amiga game ever. It will also be the best version of the original Worms available on any platform."

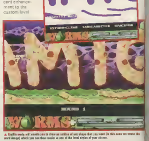
So a name has not been settled upon for this game, although it's proceeding under the working title of Worms AGA. "Just don't call it Worms Plus. I hate that name," according to Andy. "Personally I like Worms: The Next Generation," which is why the headline is thus.

One of the most useful features of the AGA only approach is that custom levels can now be designed in 16 rather than eight colours. This makes them all the more realistic. Also, Worms on different teams will have different colour jerseys making them more distinctive. There will also be what is known as Graffiti Mode. Andy realised that while many people are perfectly capable of creating their own landscapes in DPaint, not everyone wants to go to this length. Thus there is a custom level designer built in to Worms AGA as standard. Graffiti mode allows you to draw an outline of any shape you desire and then, at the click of a button, render it in one of the level styles. As well as the original forest, hell, snow and jungle levels the increased graphics and RAM capabilities of AGA Amigas will allow the inclusion of the Beach and Candy landscapes seen in the PC version.

Back to front

Another significant enhancement to the custom level design capabilities of Worms AGA is the ability to include foreground and background features. As Andy put it, "you could design a super model level where the model's clothes are in the foreground and you could then shoot them away for extra excitement... revealing all on the background. This would also be very good for secret platforms. You could make a solid background platform the same colour or texture as the foreground and then it slowly gets revealed as the battle goes on."

Yet another important addition are the cavern levels. Basically this feature (which can be toggled on or off) gives any generated landscape a roof.



▲ Graffiti mode will enable you to draw an outline of any shape that you want (in this case we wrote the word Amiga) which you can then render in one of the level styles of your choice.

New features

- A Baseball Bat
- A Pistol
- Super Sheep
- Old Ladies
- Mad Cattle
- 16 Colour Backgrounds
- A Holy Hand Grenade
- Homing Pigeon Bombs
- Worms can jump vertically
- DIY Graffiti mode
- Priceless Ming Vases
- Blimey, I love this game!

Which plays havoc with Homing Pigeons in particular, and makes Air Strikes impossible, but lends a whole new meaning to the Bungy and the Ninja Rope. The latter has also been modified to allow multiple swings: on cavern levels you can swing from rope to rope like Tarzan. The Ninja Rope and Bungee also both allow you to drop dynamite now. Swinging in from above SAS style and delivering the goods then swinging away again. Likewise he has sensibly modified the game settings to allow you to swing off and back on screen without dying.

New weapons

While the graphical changes are all very well, most people want to know what sort of new weapons this version has. The answer is plenty. The ones Andy is most proud of at the moment are the Mad Cows and the Old Ladies.

Having licensed sheep in the opening episode, Mr Davidson is now waging his own war on the Brussels beef banners with exploding cattle. They work in a similar manner to sheep, but can be collected and released as herds to stampede towards the enemy. Mad Cows are bad news in fact. Remember the Dark Side hiding in hills saving energy while all around you other worms were dying? Well cattle are just the job for defeating the Vaders of this world. Send a herd of three or four towards a hill and five seconds later the hill is in smithereens and the bad guys are exposed.

A far more unreliable instrument of death is the Old Lady. "Living in Bournemouth you see rather a lot of them," according to Andy, "so I thought I'd use them in the game." Another variation on the Sheep theme, grannies will rather slowly make their way towards the designated target mumbling about the price of milk and then exploding on contact. The only problem is that the old dears can forget where they're going. "You see they haven't got very good memories so they might just turn back and head towards your worm!"

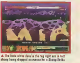
On the subject of Sheep, they have been elevated to a main weapon ("in recognition of sterling service in the first game"). So in Worms AGA you will get one sheep as standard on your weapon bars. However there are now also Super Sheep, Sheep Strikes (instead of Air Strikes) and the innovative Sheep On a Rope, designed to fool students and new age worms.

Other special crate drop weapons include the Holy Hand Grenade, complete with hallelujah choir sample, and homing pigeon bombs. Has the man gone off his rocker? We think so. As standard a baseball bat and a pistol have been added to the weapons bar too. The baseball bat is an unsubtle way of killing another worm if they are low on energy but there's also going to be a 'HOME RUN' exclamation and crowd cheering if you bat a worm off the edge of the screen according to Andy. Furthermore "the pistol is a bit useless, but handy nonetheless for assassinating Worms named after presidents." Sick.

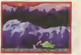
▲ Andy Davidson: "Look, someone once kneecapped the concrete donkey but my parents fixed it!" A gaming genius introduces us to his inspiration. Scary eh?

Quick release?

All of which sounds magnificent indeed. But when is it likely to be finished? Well, Andy had someone else helping him out at the beginning, but they departed some months ago, so he has now signed up Alex Amsel of XTreme racing fame for some work. But the biggest delay in getting the game finished is largely that of new ideas. Every few days Andy or one of his playtesting mates will come up with a stonking feature that just has to be added. And it's Team 17 look up to the ceiling in despair if you ask the release date, so it really is down to Andy himself. "I would say I'll have it done in 2-4 weeks," he told me. I said "So that means two months then." "Oh no, not at all!" he replied. Straight from the concrete donkey's mouth as it were.



▲ The little white dots in the top right are in fact sheep being dropped en masse for a Sheep Strike

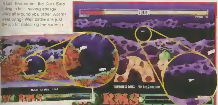


▲ This version of Worms allows you to drop dynamite from the Ninja Rope then swing away

But an official name for the new game has to be invented yet. It has to go through QC and playtesting and Andy Davidson is also pressing Martyn Brown for a CD version of the game "to do it justice with sound effects".

Even if it is finished in two-four weeks it'll be at least another month before us poor punters can get our hands on it. But by my reckoning it'll be worth it. If Mr Worms can include some of the more lunatic ideas he floated past me (including a 'Trout Mode' – I'll leave it to your imagination) this could well be the title of the year all over again. ■

Alan Dykes



▲ Send in the mad cows (circled above) and before you know it, everything around them is in tatters

▲ Special crate drop weapons include the Holy Hand Grenade with hallelujah choir sample and Homing Pigeon bombs (highlighted in yellow circle above). Looks like Joanna Lumley could be in for a [illegible] above

Rockstar

■ **DFR: September** ■ **Publisher: Mirage Software**

Poland's answer to the Amiga's survival is a company called Mirage Software (no relation to the UK giant). Based in Warsaw they have been developing, producing and distributing commercial games in Poland on the PC CD-ROM format for seven years now. However recently they have branched out from this format to suddenly appear straight out of the blue and do some Amiga games. Good news indeed. The two games we are previewing here are part of the considerable collection they currently have on sale. Thus far, although currently in Polish, should hopefully be translated into English reviewable versions soon.

First up we have Rockstar, a rock star simulator where the player must chart his melodic rise to fame and fortune starting at school and travelling on to the potential world of a future rock star. It's a strategy sim [illegible] you'll get to take part in all the glitz and glamour of the music business such as [illegible] records, making record deals, singles, albums and going on world tours.

Mirage say that all the [illegible] of Rockstar are a result of the designers painstakingly [illegible] the mechanics of song [illegible]. However so far it looks to me that the makers just threw in a couple of guitars for an all out jam session. But it's a [illegible] idea and it also plays well so it should be a lot of fun when the full version comes in. Rockstar will be available on all Amigas so in the meantime I'll just start polishing my platforms to when it comes in. ■

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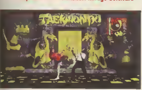
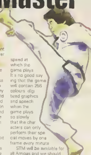
■ DFR: September ■ Publisher: Mirage Software





T[illegible] a Mortal K[illegible] ive game o[illegible] Amiga. And they [illegible] e done a ba[illegible] be[illegible] is quite s[illegible] A [illegible] Mortal Kombat

P[illegible] the les[illegible] gammer of the Beer BoyZ [illegible]

[illegible] of blood 'n' guts because there wasn't much excitement from most of the current crop of recent beat 'em ups. And you hardly ever saw a drop of blood on the screen at all."

So far it's looking good. There are plenty of digitized style characters with indigenous backdrops and a few special moves thrown in as well. The control is also very Mortal Kombat-esque with the old left, left, right and fire, down and left, down and right etc coming in handy for those famous spins and flips. The usual options are there as well: one or two player matches, a tournament match where you can select one to six characters and infinite CPU players to pit your brawn against.

All that's waiting to be seen is how well STM will convert to the Amiga. An important factor of any beat 'em up has got to be the speed at which the game plays. It's no good saying that the game will contain 256 colours, digitized graphics and speech when the game plays so slowly that the characters can only perform their special moves by one frame every minute.

STM will be available for all Amigas and we should have a review soon ■

Mark Forbes

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The Killing Grounds

■ Price: £29.99 ■ Publisher: Team 17 ✆ 01924 267776

Entering the docking bay I found myself on the receiving end of 10 alien guns ... bye, bye cruel world.

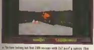
If you want to know just how far the Amiga can wander down the Doom road then we can provide you with the answer. And as for Team 17 they're full of contradictions.

After Christmas last year Martyn Brown was reluctantly telling the world that there would be no more Amiga products from Team 17. Although bullish about this at the time you could detect more than a hint of sadness from one who saw the machine rise and fall and whose personal fortunes have depended so much on it. But times change and a company like Team 17 has to change too or Martyn and the Ossett team would fast find themselves seeing familiar faces down the labour exchange. Their development has become PC and Playstation centred and new Internet (PC) and On-Line services have also been started.

But you can't keep a good man down as the saying goes – or in this case a good game. Soon after the pessimism of late 1995 it was revealed that Team 17 was dead developing a follow up to Alien Breed 3D: The Killing Grounds.

As regular perusers of our next month pages will have realised TKG has been heavily delayed – it's nearly four months late in fact. But all those months of extra development have smoothed out the rough edges and Andy Clitheroe, its developer is now confident that it's in a league of its own.

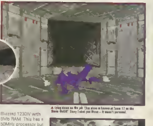
On accelerated Amigas with 4 or more Mb of RAM it really looks the part. This was the version I first saw and it's still impressive. The 1x1 pixel graphics are beautiful on walls, ceilings and floors and the lighting effects are original for an Amiga game. In places they're simply breathtaking.



▲ The bare looking but fast 2Mb version with 2x2 pixel graphics. This is the most playable but it lacks the atmosphere of its big brother.

Slothful

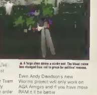
But it does suffer from two problems in this mode. Firstly so much has been put into the lighting effects in a couple of places the game is just a little too dark for its own good. One of our criticisms of Breathless was that it was too grey – TKG is too dark because this is the only way to show off the lighting effects. The second problem is with speed. 1x1 pixel graphics may look beautiful but they're a real drag to shift about the screen. Our standard spec games testing Amiga is well equipped with a Blizzard 1230IV with 8Mb RAM. This has a 50MHz processor but it struggles with TKG. In 1/2 screen size it's very playable but responses can still be jerky when tackling large or multiple enemies. In full screen it's a joke.



▲ Lying down on the job. This alien is known at Team 17 as the [illegible]. Sorry I shot you there – it wasn't personal.

With a 50MHz 68060 accelerator it's possible to play TKG at full screen size, but again once you get bogged down in combat you're better off at 1/2 size – it's just much more playable.

This is a serious issue for Team 17 and one they've obviously thought about for a while. In order to produce the be all and end all of Amiga Doom clones they've had to compromise speed. Just like iD's new PC game Quake (iD made Doom) needs a ridiculously fast processor, TKG needs more than most Amiga owners have in the way of power. Some say this is unnecessary – I say it's progress. And TKG's not alone.

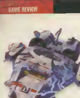


▲ A large alien meets a sticky end. The blood colour has changed from red to green for political reasons.

Even Andy Davidson's new Worms project will only work on AGA Amigas and if you have more RAM it'll be better.

To help out here Mr Clitheroe has done a sort of TKG Lite for those not so well equipped. This will work on 2Mb Amigas and exclusively uses the older 2x2 pixel format with floor, ceilings greyed out. There is also no option for full screen mode in this version. That said

Continued overleaf ▶ ▶ ▶



it really flies, especially if you have an Amiga with some fast RAM in it. In fact it's faster than the original Breed 3D in these circumstances, but it has much less features though.

Wide screen

Another way of getting the playing speed up is to go for a wide screen option. On the 4Mb version of the game you can narrow the screen for that lovely Star Wars effect. Yes, it increases the speed but it unfortunately can also lead to some problems seeing what's on the ground in front of you and what's flying overhead. Other nifty ways of squeezing more from less on the big version is to switch lighting effects off and reduce the rendering and sound quality, all of which are accessible via the F keys. Finally you have the option of altering the pixelisation to 2x2, 1x2 or 2x1.

The fact still remains though that even with fast RAM you would only load the 4Mb version at your peril. The game is so unplayable without at least a fast 030 accelerator it is ridiculous. Directional commands take a second to implement and you really are only operating at around two frames a second.

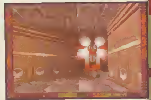
Speed is one thing that effects playability but the level layout is equally important. Luckily here Andy Clitheroe has demonstrated that he still has a grip on reality though he does appear to be operating on a plane above the the rest of us on some levels.

The enemies are as good as they were in Alien Breed 3D and Mr Clitheroe really has injected a sense of menace into them that has not been matched by creatures on any of the Amiga's other Doom clones. But wow, some of these levels are very difficult. Frustratingly so at times. In fact right from the second level the odds are stacked against you until you find a way around. This often includes going back and completing previous levels to get more ammo and life before re-attempting later ones. There are six save slots to enable you to do this though, so all is not lost. That said Breed virgins are likely to find this game impossibly difficult.

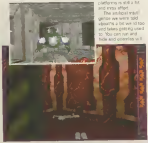
Some enemies just do not want to die or are incredibly hard to target, and although the game now features a look up and down function, targeting troublemakers on higher or lower platforms is still a hit and miss effort.

The artificial intelligence we were told about is a bit weird too and takes getting used to. You can run and hide and enemies will sometimes disappear right past you, allowing more forward progress. However, because of the level design which sends you off into the distance looking for keys and objects, you are very likely to encounter them again at a later stage on the level as you double back. Though by then you might be equipped with a bigger gun! The way it has been programmed makes playing a lot less predictable than any other game of its kind. The bad guys don't just sit there waiting for you, they gang up and sometimes even seem to run away when fired upon, coming back in greater numbers.

The weapons are an interesting bunch, with plasma guns, grenade and rocket launchers and a completely useless blaster available along the way. Mines are useful too. One of my biggest criticisms of the weapons is that you should automatically be switched to another if your current one runs out mid battle. But sadly not here so frustration reigns.



▲ When your screen goes red you're being hit. The only way to deal with some aliens is to use a mean [illegible] and then run away. Taking them on directly is like playing Russian roulette with an automatic pistol. Duh!



▲ Above: The absolutely utterly useless blaster gun. Rubbish. Top: The multiple shot plasma gun is, surprise surprise, much better. For the ultimate in rush in weaponry though you [illegible] get to try the rocket launcher.

Epic ending

In the final analysis The Killing Grounds is a revelation, if a tainted one. It's kind of like one of those big Cecil B DeMille movies: vast, lavish and expensive (on your eyes, brain, fingers and in terms of the sort of Amiga you need to run it properly). The massive cast of aliens are difficult to defeat, full of surprises, the atmosphere is, in a word, scary and the graphics and lighting are just excellent.

What a pity then that all this is compromised by game speed. The simple fact of the matter is that the Amiga is really not able for the 4Mb version of this game without serious acceleration. The 2Mb version is similarly compromised by its crudeness though there's no doubt about its speed and playability. In the final analysis The Killing Grounds biggest enemy is actually, believe it or not, the old Alien Breed 3D. To create TKG the original has grown in two directions, both of which have unavoidable faults so it could never be as complete a game as its predecessor.

The two scoreboxes tell their own story – one of top graphics versus speed. But I've got a fast Amiga so I know which one I ultimately like the best. By the way they both come in the same box so if you do upgrade your A1200 you can taste the fancier fruits at no added cost. ■

Alan Dykes

The Killing Grounds 2Mb

■ workbench version	3.0+
■ number of disks	2
■ RAM	2Mb
■ hard disk installable	yes

graphics	89%
sound	79%
lastability	91%
playability	[illegible]

A1200 A1500 A3000 A2000 A4000

OVERALL
Fast and fun but not impressive enough.
84%

The Killing Grounds 4Mb

■ workbench version	3.0+
■ number of disks	3
■ RAM	2Mb
■ hard disk installable	yes

graphics	97%
sound	[illegible]
lastability	[illegible]
playability	[illegible]

A500 A1200 A1500 A3000 A2000 A4000

OVERALL
Beautiful but flawed. Could have hit the ton.
92%

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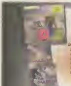

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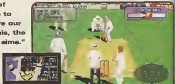
Brian Lara Cricket '96

■ Price: £29.99 ■ Publisher: Audiogenic ✆ 081 424 2244

"Welcome to the Wild World of Sport, where today we go live to the Audiogenic Stadium, where our man is waiting to report on this, the latest in a long line of cricket sims."



▲ Inset: the only black sprite in the game is on the introduction screen – Mr Lara himself.

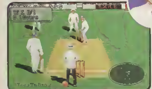
Once a company hits the nail on the head as far as how any particular sport should be represented on the computer screen every other company seems to either do its very best to completely rip it off or go so far out of their way NOT to rip it off that they miss the point completely and end up with a totally different but totally unusable control system. Fortunately Audiogenic already have the franchise on playable Amiga cricket games and though my first instinct upon playing Brian Lara Cricket '96 was to attack it for appearing almost exactly the same as the last Audiogenic cricket game I reviewed (albeit about a million years ago under the original name of Graham Gooch Cricket) it still remains about the only one I'd bother recommending to you. No, I haven't forgotten Grandslam's ITS Cricket, it's just that Audiogenic's control system is a lot more instinctive and more likely to be instantly picked up by a non cricket fan such as myself.

▲ You can pick the best eleven automatically as well as making your own selection.

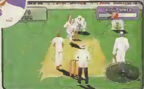
No interest

Yes it's true I've absolutely no interest in men dressed in white. Dressed as sailors or red Indians and you're getting close but as far as rubbing balls against your crotch until they're red goes... well it all seems a waste of time to me (not to mention a bit suspicious). Of course that's not to say that there isn't a good computer game lurking away somewhere and considering I thought I had no interest in football until I played Sensi I was more than prepared to approach Brian Lara with an open mind. Sorry to repor the first impression is one of laziness on Audiogenic's part.

If you've not played Audiogenic's Graham Gooch Cricket game you won't know what I'm talking about but if you have you won't be able to avoid the fact that the graphics are pre ty much identical the music IS identical and the gameplay remains unchanged (I don't like t use the word identical three times in a row — it brings bad luck. Or something). Of course



▲ The tension mounts. Will England finally get a chance to win at cricket even if it is only a simulation?



▲ The little bar at the top gives you an idea as to what pace the ball is travelling at

A fieldsman in the field races towards the ball.

u could live by the 'If it ain't broke don't fix it' rule, but even the great man Mr Lara (and let's be frank here, he's black and pretty obviously so) appears as the same white player used throughout.

Now I'm not looking for accurate digitised representations of every player on earth, but even those tiny fellas in the aforementioned Sensi Soccer have more character than these mannequins! According to the documentation, players of different colours couldn't be incorporated into the Amiga version due to "Technical restrictions". Yeah sure. How about "10 MAKE BRIAN BLACK 20 GOTO 10 RUN". Technical restrictions my rear end! I suppose you need the awesome processing power of a Pentium before you can colour someone's face and hands in the way they should be. Phew, technology these days eh!

End of the day

Moaning aside for a moment, a sports simulation's a sports simulation and looks aren't everything. Fortunately, the game itself remains as playable as it was first time round. As always seems the way with sports such as cricket, baseball, rounders etc, it's always more fun batting than fielding, but being able to control the length of matches through some pretty comprehensive options means that you can at least control how long you endure bowling before getting back to the REAL fun.

The options are also nicely geared towards those of us that aren't too bothered about recreating specific line ups, so select the 'Best Eleven' option and let the computer arrange your team for you. Then it's off to the pitch, er... court, um... field thing to bang lots of wood about for 90 minutes. Er... I mean an over.

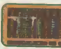
And there you have it, a pretty comprehensive but accessible cricket simulation that, while not stunning, is by no means inadequate. The only real question you need to ask yourselves is whether you're really that bothered about updated and accurate batting averages, team rosters etc. If you are, then [illegible] you WILL be after this particular release. If not, then go out and scrabble through a bargain bucket somewhere. You might just find the original Graham Gooch Cricket for a few quid cheaper. Good stuff nonetheless.

■

Matt Broughton

Above we can see our little cricketers running for dear life to get those runs in

Who's up to bat next in the cliff hanger between West Indies and Sri Lanka? It's CE Ambrose no less.



Here's the choice of teams. Today I'll be

A question of control

The controls are pretty damn simple, and even if they're NOT simple enough for you, you can select a skill level to suit your abilities (or lack thereof). The fielders can either be directly under your control or completely CPU controlled, leaving you to just worry about bowling. The bowling itself is pretty easy, just make sure that by the end of your allotted time limit you've moved the bowling cursor to the position you want and then wiggle the cursor in the prescribed manner to gain as much speed or spin as you can. Strategies come from your selection of bowlers, so you might want to opt for a fast bowler but then deliberately send a slow delivery to confuse things. You can also use spin bowlers to trick opposition and even pretend to be clumsy when fielding to tempt batsmen into going for extra runs they'll never complete. If you chose to play with manual fielding it's really just a case of running the active fielder towards the ball and throwing it back to the wicket as soon as possible. Batting is easily more fun than fielding or bowling, with a combination of timing and a good working knowledge of the various possible shots being necessary to strike a good shot every time. You still get to see the target hinting at where the bowler's aiming and then you need to select from the eight joystick directions to select the shot (ie down/left for an off-drive, left for a cover drive etc), finally timing your swing correctly depending upon the speed of the delivery. You can then speed your runners up by wagging the joystick as fast as possible. Easy non?

Brian Lara Cricket '96

A500
A500+
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A4000

■ workbench version	1.3+
■ number of disks	1
■ RAM	1Mb
■ hard disk installable	no

graphics	90%
[illegible]	79%
[illegible]	77%
[illegible]	83%

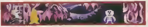
OVERALL
Very competent sim. Cricket fans will love it.
82%

Humans III

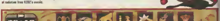
Evolution - Lost in Time

■ Price: £14.99 ■ Publisher: Gametek ✆ 01753 531831

Neanderthal men is elive and well and he's in a game no-one even knew about.



▲ Here a two of the nasties just waiting to rock havoc. Looks like I've just been given a very unhealthy dose of radiation from R2D2's console.



▲ Here a some of the very special tasks that our little He-man can perform. Jumping, shooting, punching, balancing things on his head are just some of his many talents. What a regular little James Bond he is. Not.

In these lean times you'd think that any software company releasing a game would make a song and dance about it. Not so with Gametek. Their latest game Humans 3 appeared on the shelves without so much as a hint beforehand to the general public or the media.

It always makes me suspicious when a games company does this and in light of the review here it would be easy to draw the conclusion that Gametek might have suspected this latest release wouldn't be that well received by gaming magazines. However, the fact that it hasn't been released at full price might save it a bit. We'll see.

The big bang

The original Humans was released in 1992 and games veterans will know that Humans 3 was one of the first games to be released on the Atari Jaguar.

The general consensus at the time was that it was just another Lemmings clone with nice graphics and similar puzzle type gameplay. Humans 3 follows exactly the same concept as its predecessors. It's a puzzle platformer that contains platforms, ladders, nasty beasties and all th usual puzzles to frantically solve before the timer runs out on you

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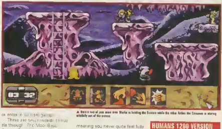

▲ Burn 1 out of your man men Merlin is holding the Beware while the other Arthur the Caveman is staring wistfully out of the screen

The plot is fairly simple. You start off with three characters under your control: Arthur the Caveman, Merlin the Wizard and Thorgrim the Viking. The aim is to locate six pieces of the Time Machine which have been scattered to the four winds (if that's possible). You can control each member of your your team individually to achieve the main level goal and piece together the Time Machine. Each character has his own action icons and special abilities and when they co-operate they form a formidable trio of time travellers.

Under pressure

Time's precious in Humans 3. You have three continues which is fine because you'll need 'em! The first levels are quite hard because as well as trying to solve the puzzles to get your humans to the exit you've also got to keep an eye out for crazed androids and yellow blobby aliens that ravage you if you're caught.

It's a shame that you still can't save the game at any time, particularly when things are about to get tricky because this would have ensured Humans 3 has a better longevity than Humans 1 and 2. Once you advance down through the levels, you do receive codes which help you to complete or enter [illegible] the game.

There are seven worlds to puzzle through: The Moon Base, Ancient Egypt, Ancient China, The Viking Era, Modern Japan, Sherwood Forest and Camelot. And each world has its own indigenous background which adds to the gameplay. However it all gets a bit too tedious, and indigenous background or not you're still left with a general feeling of sameness and boredom.

Why such harsh criticism? Well, apart from the tedium levels the major problem is that everything moves so slowly and jerkily meaning you never quite feel fully in control of your characters.

In Lemmings you can wait and strategically map your way across the platforms, altering your way to success accordingly. In Humans 3 you tend to find yourself blindly making decisions, leading you to instant death, falling off the platforms and all the while losing that precious time. This is frustrating. Personally I'd rather go back to playing Lemmings or Fury of the Furies ■

Mark Forbes

HUMANS 1200 VERSION

- workbench version .....3+
- number of disks 4
- RAM 2Mb
- hard disk installable .....yes

A1200

graphics	70%
[illegible]	55%
[illegible]	60%
[illegible]	50%

OVERALL

Dated game that's been done better before. **53%**

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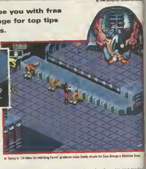
Snip tips

By [illegible] Games Consultant

Onca again it's tima to bribe you with fraa Hit Squad gamas in exchange for top tips on all Amiga gamas. Chears.



▲ Typing in 'I'd rather be watching Forest' produces some handy cheats for Core Design's Skeleton Krew

POPULOUS II

Bullfrog

Michael Coppins from Kent has not only the very last level code for this classic but another dandy little tip to boot.

First the tip. If you have the ability to use TREES in the vegetation section and have the COLUMN OF FIRE or RAIN OF FIRE in the fire section, then mass enemy destruction is but a moment away.

Simply lay trees all over the enemy land (which ain't too heavy on the mana) and then cause a massive forest fire using one of the above fire spells. If you make sure that the trees are all close enough to set each other on fire you'll create a fire that not only devastates the enemy's land but also keeps burning for ages and ages! Hmm, not very environmentally friendly but it gets the job done at least.

The last level code is WOITAB (level 999) and apparently it isn't at all hard. Coot.

WORMS

Team 17

The never ending stream of Worms codes continues (that's why we call it never ending, thicky!) with Jason Cranwell having found the way to some truly marvellous curvy levels...

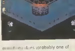
Just enter 8?? 632 or 9??632 (where ? can be any number you fancy).

Basically, as long as the first three numbers are between 800 and 999 and the last three digits are 632 you're laughing. Have fun now ya hear.

UFO: ENEMY UNKNOWN

MicroProse

There's always one of the [illegible] Some clever dick that hacks into directories and finds out what



e[illegible] t[illegible]es (probably one of them [illegible] CU Amiga M[illegible] readers I'll wager!) St[illegible] [illegible]rkers such as [illegible] ther having to sit down [illegible] to [illegible]ch?

So you [illegible] tons and tons of money with no effort then? Easy – go to the save game directory where you'll find a file called 'figlob.dat'. Load this into a text editor and put two dollar signs at the beginning (i.e. $$). Save it and then load the game as normal. You should now have a whopping $600 000 000!

If you find that you have a bug that crashes the computer when the Reaper moves on a ground assault, go to the units directory and delete the files X_REAPPAK and X_REAPANIM.PAK. Now make a copy of MUTON.PAK and MUTONANIM.PAK and rename these copies X_REAPPAK and X_REAPANIM.PAK. Now when your soldiers see a Reaper it'll appear as green lumps but at least the game won't crash when it moves. A very small price to pay for six hundred big ones, I'm sure you'll agree!

THEME PARK

Bullfrog

This is a bit of a variation on a cheat we have printed a number of times before but Mark Wood obviously enjoys a bit of variety in his life.

All you do is have the game screen on and press Shift/Z/X, Alt/Z/X, Ctrl/Z/X. Now every time you press C you'll get £50 000 and all the rides.

ZEEWOLF

Binary Asylum

On pain of death I am asked to print all the level codes for this excellent game. Thanks to Steve Portland from Plymouth, it's an easy job.

REQUIN
WOLFRAM
FUUMOON
JMARGUS
STAG
KRAKEN
STATION
GBULL
STATIPAUSE
OOITNOW
SHIPOECK
OLOBOFF
BEHAVE
SHADOW
MAXFUEL
REPLAY

SKELETON KREW

Core Design

A bit of an oldy now (and it seems like only yesterday this was released!) but Saul Reid of Tilbury would like to remind us that by typing 'I WOULD RATHER BE WATCHING FOREST' you can then press Esc once you've selected a character and loaded the level to reveal a cheat mode. Now go down to 'Option' and press your joystick right. This will take you to a level select menu from which you can er... select a level. Quite remarkable, don't you think?

FRONTIER

Gametek

Just in case there are still unbelievers out there, the jump-50 000-light years in one go cheat can be tested out by jumping from Sol to co-ordinates -60 57 in one journey. Cheers to Sebastian Lau of Walthamstow for that reminder. ■

And that's your lot! As always, just a quick note to thank all those readers who've written in (your games are on their way soon!) and to remind any others thinking of sending something in to let me know what machine you've got and what game you'd like (in an ideal world, obviously!) Be seeing you..

Adventure Helpline

Adventuring may be a man's world but here's one girl who's seen it, done it, and wears the T-shirt better than anyone else I know!

Eye of The Beholder II

I've gotten as far down in the dungeon as I can and reached a level where I keep having nightmares so I can't rest. There is a room here which has lots of pressure pads and writing on the wall which says "You must leave many things behind". I've tried everything I can think of but the exit door won't open. I've also found ants in the floor below and cracks in the wall. Help?

Peter Hall, Hundon

Think of the number five on the face of a dice. You must drop objects in the same pattern as the four outer dots, then move your party onto the middle pressure pad to make the door open. You do realise that nothing good is going to come flying out don't you? As for the ants downstairs, there is not much I can tell you apart from the fact that new ants will keep coming through the cracks, so keep an eye open for reinforcements. I hope that when the insects take over the world they remember how often we used to take them on picnics with us.

While I'm talking about this game, let me give this information to those who've written to ask for the locations of the six chrome shields. There are three shields on level three of the Azure tower, two shields on level two and one on level one.

Space Quest I

I am stuck at the beginning of the game. I have in my inventory a cartridge, a keycard, three buckazoids and a gadget. I can't get anywhere, however, as I keep getting killed by the guard.

Miss N. Williams, Rhyl

Yes, well, what can I say? You're not doing too well are you? You should use the lift to get to the bottom deck. At the pulsing lights you must type the command, "Push open bay doors" onto the console. Go right and insert the keycard. Go up in the lift. Press the left and right buttons, get the gadget and the suit. Go to the console and open the airlock. Go through the airlock and push the button on the console to raise the space craft. Enter the craft, fasten belt, push the power button, close the door, push the Autonav button and pull the lever.

Monkey Island II

I can't find the last ingredient I need to make the voodoo doll of Largo LaGrande. Apparently I need "Something of the Dead" to finish it off. Help?

Christopher Dougherty, Bradford

Well I'm 'Something of the Dead', (drop dead-gorgeous anyway) but I'm afraid you can't have me, as I'm going steady with a zombie at the moment. However, I do know a lot about the dead and what I know is that if you go digging at the far side of the cemetery you could pick up just what your looking for. You will of course need a shovel to help you dig, so make sure you've taken the one from the sign which stands beside the bridge.

Simon the Sorcerer

I can't get past the dwarf guard. I think I'm supposed to give him some beer but I can't seem to nick the barrel from the pub.

Nylah Ali, Glasgow

Make sure you pick up the matches in the pub and chop off the dwarf's beard using the scissors. Now light the smokebox from inside the cottage (use the pig to eat the door) and use it to collect wax from the beehive. Go back to the pub and order a drink, when the barman ducks down use the wax on the barrel. The landlord will now throw the barrel out because he thinks it's empty. Collect the barrel, wear the beard and you're in!

Indiana Jones: Fate of Atlantis

I am having trouble getting out of the labyrinth where Sternhart died. I am working with Sophia and I have the Oracle Gem. There is a chain in the waterfall which when I climb up I find myself back in the room where I used the whip on the statue with the bull shaped head. What do I do now?

K. Rothwell, Runcorn

After finding the worldstone you can climb back up using the chain behind the waterfall. To go downstairs you must use the whip on the large statue's head. You must collect all three statue heads because you'll need to place them on a shelf at one point.

To get the gold box you first need to find Sternhart's staff and use it with the clock to release a counterweight and trigger the lift. Use the staff in a statue's mouth and the elevator will take you to the room with the gold box. Take the box and the two heads. To get through the closed gate you'll have to persuade Sophia to climb through the hole. Use the answers (2,2,1,4 and 2). Once in the Map room you'll have to use the amber fish to find the secret door, but first you must put all of the orichalcum (including Sophia's necklace) in the gold box.

You can only open one of the three doors in the Map room, as each one is for the path you are taking through the game (Wits, Fists, or Team). You better have the ship's rib from the dig site in Algiers with you at this point as you'll need it to dig yourself out through the final wall.

For anyone doing the Wits path who's got themselves stuck, there are a couple of differences. Use the statue which looks like the one stolen by Kerner with the minotaur's hatch. Place a bead in the statue.

In the Map room you must build an orichalcum detector by tying the clothesline to a hard rubber comb and charging it with static electricity from the woollen scarf. Use the detector to find the beads, then shut them in the gold box. Use the detector again to find the secret door.

Police Quest 3

Please tell me how to start off Day 4. I am very confused.

Adam Neon, Thorngumbald

When you arrive at the Police Station go to the Homicide Office and pick up the note from your desk. Go to the third floor and pick up a tracker device from the Head Technician, (it's in one of the desk drawers). Go to the ground floor and get in the black and white. Open the glove compartment and take the calibration chart for use in court. ■

If you've got a little problem with your favourite Role Playing Game and would like Vamp to help you out, drop her a line at CU Amiga Magazine, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU

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Techscene

The technical section is exciting this month, with several big software releases, all of which push forward the Amiga's boundaries in a significant way.

48 OctaMED SoundStudio

The latest version of OctaMED is almost unrecognisable but you'll still love it. Professional sound here we come

52 Final Writer 5

Is the latest version of Final Writer a match for its Wordworth adversary? Find out on page 52

54 Ultra IDE CD-ROM drive

This could be the answer to the problem of buying a heavyweight CD-ROM drive for lightweight bucks

55 Quarterback Tools

The latest version of a world renowned back-up system is tested, and the result is hardly a surprise

56 Development Tools

Since Commodore went out of business developers have had to go it alone. Now Amiga Technologies and GTi have released some help

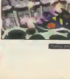
60 PD Scene

The wonder of the Aminet is shown by this month's PD scene all of the material has been leeched from this great site

62 PD Utilities

This month's PD Utilities includes an update to our SoundTracker cover disk, a thumbnail creator and more

Toolbox
Publishing



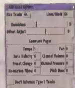
OctaMED Sound

■ Price: £See box-out ■ Developer: RBF Software ■ Supplier:RBF Software ✆ 01703 785 680

64 channels of 16-bit stereo audio from your Amiga? It's possible with OctaMED SoundStudio.

Judging by the modules submitted by readers for this month's cover CD, OctaMED is far and away the most popular tracker among our readership. It's not attained such popularity by chance. The legions of unique and special features it offers have made it the first choice for Amiga musicians ever since it raised itself above the basic level of many other trackers. Now it's changed its name and done just about everything possible to turn your Amiga into a 64 track 16 bit stereo music machine.

While it's true you can get stunning results from the most simple traditional style tracker program (see the Dex and Jonesey feature on page 26 for proof) OctaMED, now SoundStudio, offers a totally unrivalled list of unique and powerful features including MIDI sequencing, powerful sample editing, multiple command pages (well worth checking out) and reams of options to let you tweak every possible aspect of your tunes to perfection. However the real star of the show this time round is the all new Mixing section which makes it possible to run up to 64 sample channels with realtime effects through the normal Amiga audio, direct to disk or through one of a few 16-bit sound cards.


Max Tracks 64 Lines/Block 64
Resolution 8
Offset Adjust 0
Command Pages
Tempo 1 Pan 0
Note Velocity 0 Channel Volume 0
Preset Change 0 Channel Pressure 0
Modulation Wheel 0 Pitch Bend 0
☐ Don't Interpret Type 1 Tracks

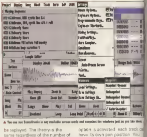
▲ There are now even more features to make it as easy as possible to integrate MIDI and samples.

64 Channels

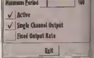
SoundStudio will still run in standard four channel mode but if you want to make use of these new multitrack modes you need to invoke the Mixing page. This is the part of the program that controls how your numerous tracks are combined into a single sample and where they are sent after that to be replayed. The theory is the same regardless of the number of tracks and the output device. When you start your module playing, the relevant samples are resampled to the pitches specified in the tracks, processed with any player commands that have been inserted and then combined into a signal that's sent off to the chosen output device. Other factors are also taken into consideration during mixing, such as the stereo position of each track and whether any echo effects are to be used. See Sound Lab on page 81 for more on mixing theory.

The 16 bit output options include the Toccata card (as reviewed April 96 CU Amiga Magazine) and the new Delfina DSP card (review next issue). These are both Zorro cards requiring a big box Amiga. Aura, the only soundcard for the A1200, cannot be used as an output in this way although you can incorporate Aura samples within your tracks.

This mixing approach opens up other new possibilities. When the Stereo option is activated, each track c have its own pan position. You can even use stereo samples; they take up just one track and replay with all the stereo pann intact. A new command (code 2 can be used to set the pan position of a sample within the playing sequence. This makes it easy to set up parts of a song in wh a particular sound moves around the stereo field in a specific way and also has possibilities for effects like rapid random pann and so on. Playing samples backwards is now possible too (previously you would have to reverse the sample wave and then play that forwards). This also means you can set up ping-pong loops



▲ You can use SoundStudio in any available screen mode and snapshot the windows just as you like them.


Aura Sampler Options
Minimum Period 160
☑ Active
☑ Single Channel Output
☐ Fixed Output Rate

▲ Some of the problems with the Aura support have been rectified, although this is still limited due to the nature of the sound card.

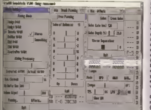
Ordering and prices

The pricing details are a bit complicated, depending on which version you want, where you are ordering from and whether or not you are a registered OctaMED 6 user. Prices in brackets are for registered OctaMED 6 users

	UK	EC	Rest of World
Floppy with manual	£75 (£35)	£85 (£40)	£90 (£45)
CD (no manual)	£35 (£25)	£40 (£30)	£45 (£35)

SoundStudio is available from RBF Software, 169 Dale Valley Road, Hollybrook, Southampton SO16 6QX, England. UK: cheque or postal order payable to RBF Software (or cash via registered post). Outside UK: Giro, Bankers Draught or Eurocheque payable to RBF Software or American Express payable to S Burt-Frost

dStudio



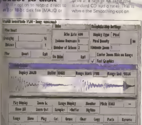
▲ The new 'Mixing' mode is the star of SoundStudio, with 16-bit stereo panning and realtime effects on offer.

samples which is one way of making a smooth sustained loop from a long evolving sound.

Whether you are using an 8, 14 or 16-bit output, your modules be made up of any combination of 8 and 16-bit samples. They are all scaled automatically according to your settings.

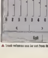
Direct to disk

With this option to record direct to an 8 or 16-bit disk file (MAUD or WAV) you can even master your own tracks for CDs without ever making an analogue recording (you don't even need a 16-bit card to output a 16-bit disk file). To demonstrate this we've included an audio track on this month's cover CD. This was created using 16-bit mono and stereo samples then recorded straight to a hard drive at a rate of 44.1kHz (the standard CD audio rate). This is where the Smoothing option comes in handy. The mixing stage introduces some unpleasant noise which detracts somewhat from the overall sound quality. However, with the Smoothing filter turned on this is eliminated. It seems that a little of the high end frequencies of the song are also muted but not to any great degree.



▲ The excellent sample editor remains generally unchanged from OctaMED 6 – no time stretch features yet!

Smoothing the output takes a lot of CPU time and so it's not possible to use it during realtime playback normally (everything goes a bit wobbly) but this doesn't matter when you're recording to disk as there's built-in time correction so you'll end up with a good clean sound even if it takes half an hour to record a five minute song. The end result is a massive sample file which can be used to cut an audio CD using a CD writer drive and some software such as Master ISO (the software we used to make this CD). In this way you could record and master a complete CD album using just one Amiga and no external audio mixers at all!



▲ Track volumes can be set from the new mixer.

Realtime FX

Yet another new treat on offer is the realtime effects page. From here you can select one of two types of echo and alter the echo rate and depth of each, along with the stereo separation. This can be

Output quality

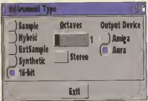
In order to make use of SoundStudio's 64 channels of sample playback you'll need to choose one of the mixing routines. The best ones are those that use a 16-bit sound card. There are also a couple of mixing options for standard Amigas and direct to disk recording features. If you are running just four channels you can use the old-style 8 bit mode. This is how they stack up:

Toccata, Maestro and Delfina: the routine is the same for each of these three sound cards. After all the tracks have been mixed together (which is done in realtime as the song plays) the combined 16-bit audio signal is played out through the chosen device. We tested this extensively with a Toccata fitted in an A4000/040.

While you can set the output rate to 44.1kHz or even 48kHz in 16-bit stereo, without the smoothing filter activated there is still some mixing noise which is most apparent when the range of frequencies being played is fairly small, such as when only bass parts are being played. This noise is very much like the noise you hear when playing samples at very low rates. Normally the smoothing filter cannot be used in realtime unless you have a very fast CPU (eg 68040) and just a couple of samples playing at once. However, once more instruments are added and the range of frequencies widens, the mixing noise becomes far less prominent. So long as clean samples are used there are no other problems with sound quality. Overall the results are very good, although certainly not faultless.

Amiga 8 bit: the quality you can expect depends on the CPU power you have, which dictates the maximum mixing rate you can use. If you are using a video screen mode (PAL or NTSC rather than VGA or Productivity for example) you are limited to a maximum mix rate of 28kHz. In 8-bit mode the results can be quite noisy but as with all the other modes, once there's enough going on in the song the noise doesn't sound too bad.

Amiga 14 bit: there's a big difference between this and the 8-bit mode. Although the overall output is not as loud as 8-bit, there's a definite improvement in sound quality. Parts of modules that sound very dirty in 8-bit mixing mode come through much cleaner. Even though the mixing options allow you to add echoes, stereo panning and lots of channels, the actual clarity of the output is not quite as good as old-style four channel replay (which is to be expected).



○ Sample
○ Hybrid
○ ExtSample
○ Synthetic
● 16-bit

Octaves 1

☐ Stereo

Output Device
○ Amiga
● Aura

▲ Each instrument can have its own 'type' setting, most useful in four channel mode and for Aura (see right)

activated while you're making up your tracks too, so whenever you bang out a little riff on the keyboard you hear it with the echo effects. Unfortunately when you play your module the entire sound is passed through the echoes which generally leads to a rather muddy result, although you can set the delay time very precisely which is a big help. It's a shame you can't assign certain tracks to the effects and leave others dry. Even so this will come in very handy.

There are a handful of other minor benefits which stem from all this mixing business. Because the samples are all rolled into one and processed before being replayed, some of the limitations of the Amiga's built in sample replay routines are no longer a problem. For example, the maximum sample length used to be 130K but now you can have samples as big as you like (RAM permitting). Samples can now be played over a range of six octaves instead of three.

MIDI modes

The tracker environment has never been the best place to record MIDI music but the ability to record and sequence MIDI gear alongside module tracks is another of OctaMED's unique pluses. Without such an option Amiga music software options are split into two opposing camps of tracker and MIDI sequencer. Fortunately SoundStudio is well stocked with MIDI features, so when you've reached the limits of your Amiga's audio it's no problem to add a MIDI synth to expand your options. Now there are some additional MIDI features.

You can now set one Amiga to become the 'master' machine and another to become the 'slave' in a new way of getting two versions of OctaMED playing at once. Up to 16 samples can be used on the slave Amiga, each one assigned to its own MIDI channel. These samples are triggered via from the master machine (which runs an eight track module). The main advantage this has over the old style (using 'send sync' or manually synchronising two machines) is that you only have to compile the module on one Amiga rather than having to make two modules running in parallel with two resulting [illegible].

Another useful addition in the MIDI department is the ability to assign any MIDI controller to commands 31 to 3F (previously this was a bit complicated requiring two consecutive commands).

Conclusion

OctaMED has earned its new name. Programmer Teijo Kinnunen has worked some minor miracles and apparently added just about every feature that has ever been requested. Going out on a limb with support for 16-bit sound cards is a major advantage, and even then the software manages to do absolutely amazing things with the hardware (such as squeezing 64 16-bit channels with effects from Toccata, officially a simple two channel record and replay card).

It's owners (or future owners) of these 16-bit cards who will get the most from SoundStudio. The multi channel Amiga options are still more fuzzy than standard four channel mode, so if you use 8-bit sampling for commercial recordings the benefits of multiple tracks, panning and effects will probably be outweighed by the loss of sound quality.

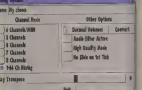
They say this will be the last ever version of the program, but between you and me I think they're testing the water to see what reaction they get. With good sales and feedback we could see another upgrade yet. Whether we do or not I'd advise any Amiga musician to get [illegible] of SoundStudio and sample [illegible] delights without delay. You [illegible] be sorry you did. ■

Tony Horgan

I can see your Aura from here

HiSoft's 12-bit PCMCIA sampler is not included on the list of output devices in the mixing section, but you can make some use of it, channelling any 16 or 8-bit samples through it at the expense of one of the standard Amiga channels. Now you can sample straight through the Aura card from within SoundStudio and the results are good and clear. Just what you do with your Aura samples once you've taken them is another matter.

The main problem seems to be that it demands a lot of CPU power merely in order to replay a sample. The highest sample rate it can replay depends on your CPU power. To stop the computer crashing if you try to play too high a frequency through the Aura, you need to set a maximum rate by hand. This is awkward and not at all satisfactory and once you do get it working, it takes so much CPU power to play samples at a decent rate that everything else often goes haywire. Quite often the sample will change pitch halfway through playing. Frankly it's a lot of trouble to go to for very disappointing results.



Name: My choon

Channel Mode
○ 4 Channels/MIDI
○ 5 Channels
○ 6 Channels
○ 7 Channels
○ 8 Channels
● 1-64 Ch Mixing

Other Options
☐ Decimal Volumes
☐ Audio Filter Active
☐ High Quality Mode
☐ No Slide on 1st Tick

Play Transpose 0

▲ That button at the bottom left is the key to all the new fangled stereo 16-bit multichannel features. Hopefully you might also think of something a bit more adventurous than I did for the name of my tune.

CD-ROM version

The CD version comes with loads of extra goodies but with no printed manual, just the AmigaGuide manual (in German, English, French and Italian versions). There are loads of modules and a very large selection of sound samples that vary in style and quality. Extra software on the CD includes the module converter AMFC, Menÿ (a neat menu creation system) and the sample replay tool Play 16, which comes in handy for playing the demo song stored on the CD as a massive 37Mb sample file. If you're not too bothered about having a printed manual then the CD-ROM version is definitely the best option.

OCTAMED SOUNDSTUDIO

[illegible] Workbench 2 or higher, recommended 16-bit sound card [illegible] 8MB hard drive 68030 or higher CPU.

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A1500
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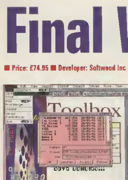
Final Writer 5

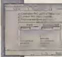
■ Price: £74.95 ■ Developer: Softwood Inc ■ Supplier: Softwood Europe ✆ 01773 836781

AMIGA SUPERSTAR

What delights does the latest version of this classic word processing package have? Let's find out shall we?



▲ You can now base a new document on a template. Some examples are supplied with the program while others can be created by you and saved for use later on.



▲ Typos can be thing of the past with the Auto Correct feature for correcting commonly typed errors

With all the confusion that's around at the moment about the Amiga's future, it's nice to see a new product that's likely to bring a smile to those of you who use Final Writer. Release 5 of this great word processor is packed with new features, such as Tables, HTML export, RTF Import and Export and much more that have long been on people's wish lists. However, I've seen many a program that flagged much wanted features only to find it is disappointing in practice. So the proof of the pudding is in the eating. This is, however, Final Writer we're dealing with and with its track record I didn't expect to be disappointed.

Multi-talented

First impressions were a let down as I didn't see much difference between this and previous versions. However, once I dug a little deeper I discovered a new menu for Tables and many other new additions to the various menus.

There will be many of you, no doubt, who like me, won't have a lot of use for a tables function but this one in Final Writer is nice nonetheless because it's so multi faceted. First and foremost, you can use it to create tables to store various types of data, although I was shocked to see no mention of Final Calc or Final Data in relation to being able to share information between them and Final Writer. Wordworth will let you import spreadsheets from TurboCalc after all. But that niggle aside, you can also use the tables function for doing captions for pictures or multi-line secondary columns of text.

Creating a table in Final Writer is similar to Word for Windows. You use a requester to set out the attributes for the table such as the number of rows and columns. If you misjudge how many columns or rows you require these can be inserted later.

What I didn't see was a feature letting you apply mathematical functions to data within a table, hopefully that will be available in future versions. You can jazz up the presentation of your table using items such as line weights and coloured fills. The width of a cell can easily be adjusted but the height of a cell is self adjusting depending on the height and number of lines of text. There isn't however a rotation facility and you cannot place a table over other objects or make it transparent.

Other programs

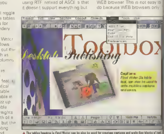
Another major new feature is RTF support. This is a common file format used for exchanging files between WYSIWYG word processors on various computer platforms. The problem with using RTF instead of ASCII is that it doesn't support everything but at least it's there for those who don't share my view.

One of RTF's more useful functions is its Font Mapping feature where you can tell Final Writer to replace a font from the file being imported to a similar looking one on the Amiga.

Do not, however, think that RTF will be the answer to your dreams. In some simple examples RTF works fine, but add graphics or things like WOBS (white on black) tables and so on to a page and they will need to be re-created in Final Writer as they are not supported by RTF.

DIY Web

Those of you who enjoy surfing the WEB will love Final Writer's HTML export function. This will take a Final Writer document and export it so it can be loaded into a WEB browser. This is not easy to do because WEB browsers only



Captions:
Final Writer 5's table tool, can also be used to write multi-line captions and so on.

▲ The tables function in Final Writer can be also be used for creating captions and multi-line blocks of text.

So what's new?

- Font menu item on layout menu
- Enhanced define styles requesters
- Save sets of preferences to disk for use with other documents
- Save sets of styles for use in other documents
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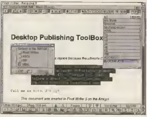


Desktop Publishing ToolBox

...s rejoice because the ultimate C...

Call me on 01332 ...

This document was created in Final Writer 5 on the Amiga!

▲ Final Writer comes with a template containing typical Styles required for a HTML file as well as a SaveAs function that converts what you see on screen into a text file with the necessary HTML codes. This can then be edited if need be.

support limited page formatting functions so you must follow the guidelines in the manual when creating such documents. Final Writer is not an HTML editor however, so it should be treated with care when creating WEB pages because it is so easy to create 'illegal' elements and have to go back later to correct the problem.

The HTML function also has drawbacks if you want to use pictures. While a text document I created imported fine into my WEB browser, adding pictures was a pain. For one thing, the new datatype support for Final Writer is only as good as the datatypes you are using and although some of mine worked fine, sods law meant the GIF and JPEG ones did not. There were other problems as well, such as producing links to other HTML documents but as I could not get hold of anyone from Softwood for advice on this, I'll have to leave that subject for another day.

The saving grace of course is that Final Writer is a word processor and as such can be used to create the HTML files manually. I find, for example, that by keeping pieces of useful HTML code taken from other HTML files, I can cut, paste and modify anything that Final Writer doesn't support.

For the masses

So far the features I have looked at are 'specialist' ones. Tables, RTF and HTML are all features that the minority will probably use rather than the majority. The only exception being the tables facility for adding columns of text.

There are many more features that everyone will benefit from too though. Final Writer 5 now supports the creation of a document from a template. A number of templates are included like one for HTML with Styles already created for you, but if required you can also add your own templates. You do this by saving a Final Writer document to disk and then choosing 'New From template' whereby it gives the chosen document an Untitled name so you can't overwrite your original document.

For fumble fingers like me another new feature that is long overdue is AutoCorrect. This is where you look out for common mistakes and have the program correct them automatically.

As already mentioned, Final Writer 5 supports datatypes which is one way for it to import graphics formats other than IFF ILBM. The problem is many datatypes are "worse than useless" and so it was with a number I tried with Final Writer. The TIFF one I used first worked fine, but the GIF and JPEG ones did not, which meant I had to spend time looking for others. Relying on what are primarily public domain utilities for functions within a commercial application is asking for trouble and I would have been a lot happier had it come with its own filters that worked.

On top of all these features are many others including an increase to 256 for the number of styles you can have in a document, a function that enables you to re-arrange sections within a document, another function for saving Styles and a facility for saving TypeSpecs as macros.

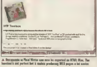
Overall verdict

This upgrade is what I would have hoped for in version 4 and I expect it will find favour with many Final Writer users. For those asking the question 'is it better than Wordworth 5', the answer is yes and no. There are no footnotes, for example, and both programs are still able to do things the other cannot. So although this upgrade is very welcome and makes Final Writer a much better program, there is still yet more work to be done. Final Writer, for example, still insists on remapping the colours in an image when you flick back from another screen. When viewing a document with 256 colours, this remapping can take up to a minute and being impatient I'd prefer it just didn't do it.

When using the Replace function, Final Writer only allows you to enter 16 characters into the Replace gadget. For me that's annoying; others may not however find it a problem. I would also like to see a font preview so I can see the look of the font being selected.

The shining light, however, with Final Writer 5 is that work is still progressing on the program and that is a godsend because we Amiga users need not only new machines, but stalwart developers like Softwood to keep on producing better products and Final Writer 5 is a very good product indeed. ■

Larry Hickmott



▲ Documents in Final Writer can now be exported as HTML files. The function's not perfect but it makes producing WEB pages a lot easier.

Final Writer 5

requirements: Version 2.04 of Workbench, hard disk and 2Mb of free memory

A600	[illegible]
A1200	[illegible]
A1500	[illegible]
A2000	
A3000	
A4000	

OVERALL A good update to the Final Writer family **92%**

Ultra CD-ROM

Price: £See boxout ■ Developer: Siren Software ■ Supplier: Siren Software © 0161 796 3208

CD-ROM is the fastest growing area of Amiga expansion ... and the drives are getting cheaper by the month.

The PC community is used to using IDE as opposed to SCSI CD ROM drives. The Amiga community is not. Although products like the Alpha Data PCMCIA interface have allowed IDE drives to be connected, the most popular method has been to use a SCSI drive and the Squirrel SCSI interface, also via the PCMCIA slot. The problem is that SCSI drives are more expensive than IDE drives (more than twice the price in some cases) and what if you want to use the PCMCIA port for something else? The only other widely known alternative is to install a SCSI chip onto an accelerator, but the combination is often expensive. Enter Atapi.

The A1200 has both been fitted from the outset with an IDE interface on the motherboard. This is used to mount 2.5 inch and 3.5 inch hard drives internally but with a little bit of help it can also be used to mount an IDE CD-ROM drive – with some help from Atapi. This is an acronym for Advanced Technology Attachment Package Interface. Siren Software have started distributing three competitively priced CD ROM drives which use this interface and the IDE slot in your Amiga to give you drives which do not jam the PCMCIA and are cheaper than their SCSI equivalent.

The one reviewed here is the four speed version and costs just £169.99. Getting it up and running involves taking your machine apart, but since you must already have a hard drive installed to be able to run this device chances are that you are already familiar with the innards of your Amiga. If you're not, stop here and think seriously. If your machine is still under warranty removing the case voids this. If you are not even slightly techn cally minded then you could do irreparable damage to your Amiga and hard drive so get an expert to do it instead – or stick to the external PCMCIA technol gy of the Squirrel.

Nice fit

Installing this drive should take under 10 minutes. You remove the top casing of your Amiga a its keyboard, unscrew the floppy drive and remove this, then slide out the covered slot on the back of the bottom casing just behind the floppy drive. Then the hard drive cable needs to be removed from the IDE interface and replaced by a long cable suppl in the Ultra CD ROM kit. If you are using a 2.5 inch drive there a tailor made female connector just an inch or two above the interface connector which allows you to reattach the drive again immediately.

Next up you fit the Atapi interface, a printed circuit board with one 44 pin and two 40 pin connectors (one of these is for a 3.5 inch drive if you normally use on the other is for the CD ROM drive). This slides into the empty port at the back of the Amiga mentioned above and is screwed in place with ease – there are no extra holes or modifications involved. Once this is done, the IDE cable is connected to this a you can place your hard drive cr dle back where it belongs, screw the disk drive back on and repla your keyboard and the casing. Then you connect your CD ROM drive to the 40 pin connector no poking out of the back of your Amiga, boot up, install the provided IDE Fix software and you're u and running. Theoretically

Prices

This drive comes in four, si and eight speed formats. Here is what they cost

Ultra Four-Speed £169
Ultra Six-Speed £199.99
Ultra Eight Speed. £239.99

Look at this baby go

We tested the £199 Ultra with its Hitachi IDE quad speed drive alongside the £199 HiSoft Sony 2 4 speed SCSI drive - the closest in price on the SCSI/Squirrel front at the moment - which we use as standard in the office Both were tested on A1200s with Blizzard 1230 accelerators and 8Mb RAM. The tests we ran were designed to examine the raw transfer speed using SysInfo, the practical transfer speed of copying a reasonably large file from CD to RAM and the practical speed of transferring a lot of smaller files in a drawer to RAM The results were as follows:

	Atapi IDE 4-speed	Squirrel SCSI 2 4 speed
SysInfo	604 857 bytes per second	357 794 bytes per second
1.4Mb folder, various files	12 Seconds (118 7k/s)	7 Seconds (200k/s)
4.79Mb single lha file	8 Seconds (587 5k/s)	13 Seconds (361 5k/s)

The Ultra is faster with large files, as its SysInfo reading indicates, but the HiSoft drive is faster transferring many smaller files. This actually has more to do with the drive mechanism than IDE/Atapi versus SCSI The Sony drive can simply jump between files faster than the Hitachi.

There are three problems though Although the instructions provided suffice they could have used a lot more illustration to make their point Also the cable provided to us was set up wrong according to the instructions it had to be attached to the Atapi device in a specific way This was not the case and after several attempts to start up the drive the problem was located and switching the connector around solved the problem However this involved removing the casing again an unnecessary hassle Siren assure us that this is not a normal occurrence and we have no reason to doubt them but it does highlight potential traps for the inexperienced

The third problem relates to the type of hard drive used in conjunction with the CD ROM IDE hard drives have jumpers which dictate whether they are the sole device or whether another is used

The 3 5 inch hard drive on another of our Amigas had such a setup and for the life of us we couldn t get it to work The drive is old so the jumper diagram no longer exists (if indeed we ever had one) so we gave up in fear of losing the gigabyte of information on it No such problem occurred with the 2 5 inch drive but the potential will always be there

Conclusion

There was initial suspicion when this drive arrived in £169 sounds cheap for an Amiga CD ROM drive but internal quad speed IDE drives are selling in PC magazines for £50 or less now so it didn t look such a bargain Then again there is an external case with a power supply which certainly adds to the cost and will be necessary for most people It is also supplied with IDE-Fix and the Atapi adaptor All put together with instructions it minimises the amount of DIY you have to do – with a consequent price tag

The transfer speed was almost double that of the SCSI drive we tested it against although this is partially because that was a 2 4 speed unit (but still costs £20 more) The six and eight Speed drives also available from Siren are not to be sniffed at either Like most SCSI drives the Ultra has reasonable CD32 emulation too

This drive suffice for most people s usage and keeping the potential technical problems in mind if having a free PCMCIA slot is a priority then you should seriously consider it ■

Alan Dykes

Ultra CD-ROM

You will need either an A600 or an A1200 with a hard drive.

A600

A1200

92%

91%

90%

OVERALL

IDE prices finally come to the Amiga.

90%

Quarterback Disk Suite

■ Price: £34.99 ■ Developer: Quosar

■ Supplier: Wizard Developments ✆ 01322 527800

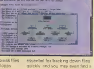
Keep your Amiga valuables as safe as houses with this two in one pack.

Quarterback a hard disk back-up and recovery system is one of the those programs which I have been using for years So I was very happy to discover that it has just been re-released by Wizard Developments I was even happier when I discovered that both Quarterback utilities a back up program and a disk tools suite are on Wizard s one disk pack

The back up program is so powerful and easy to use that in all seriousness you really might be tempted to use it on a regular basis It can back up to floppy or SCSI tape drive handle dates and make incremental back-ups It can automatically compress files and supports multiple floppy drives Basically it s terrific one of the few back up programs I have used regularly I always warn folks to back up their hard drives You know why? Because I also use Quarterback Tools

Tools seems to have able to fix everything which has happened to my hard drives over the years (with the possible exception of the time I dropped the bare drive mechanism onto a concrete floor) There are four options Analyse and Repair (for when Bad Things seem to be happening to your drive) Optimise (for reorganising the drive and speeding it up no end) Recover Lost/Deleted files (for fixing accidents) and Edit (for low level file editing)

As with the back-up program there is a full ARexx port which makes advanced macros possible Also supplied on the disk are bonus programs which are worth buying by themselves Schedule Pro will trigger programs at certain times and although primarily designed for reminding you to make back ups you can use it for almost anything AmigaDOS programs and ARexx scripts can be programmed to occur using the simple day/date/time display



You ll also find Locator essential for tracking down files quickly and you may even find a use for the floppy disk duplicator encryption routines and file deletion options

Every program in the suite looks extremely smart with a distinctive and classy appearance What s more important though is the reliability and as I said I ve been using the programs for years and they simply get better

At this price it s a bargain which you shouldn t ignore If you are having any problems with your drives and if you want to prevent problems from happening in the first place order your Quarterback Tools Deluxe as soon as possible ■

John Kennedy

95%

Amiga Developer CDv1

■ Price: £14.95 ■ Developer: GTI and AT ■ Supplier: see adverts fur UK suppliers

Christmas has come early for Amiga developers in the shape of this CD. It's got all you need and more.

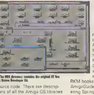
Amiga developers haven't been particularly well treated these last few years. As I write there is still no Amiga Developer Support Program, so this CD comes at a time when it will be most appreciated.

Previously you had to write off to CATS (Commodore Amiga Tech Support) and for around £15 they would send you the five disk NDK (Native Developer Kit) with everything they had on it, but that service ended ages ago. The Developer CD1.1, however, includes all this and more, so for new developers it's a must have.

If you've never had anything like this before, the most useful part of the CD you will find is the NDK 3_1 directory. This contains the unarchived versions of those five disks.

The essentials

Everything you could need is supplied on the disk in a very easy to understand format. First we have the Autodocs. If you've ever tried developing software that uses the OS without the Amiga Autodocs you'll know what a nightmare it can be. Luckily that's not a problem here as the Autodocs on the disk are summaries of library and device functions in standard form, stripped from the OS source code. There are descriptions of all the Amiga OS libraries and device functions, some with short examples. Having the documentation for every Amiga system library function is invaluable. Thankfully, the Autodocs are in text format and in AmigaGuide form which is useful as it's not much fun having to convert them yourself. And there are lots of tutorial files explaining how to use the new features of OS3.0 and OS3.1. Also included are the Release 2 examples from the RKM books, and a collection of AmigaGuide Volume 1 and 2 covering Spring 1987 to April 1993.


▲ The NDK directory contains the original AT five disk Native Developer Kit.

In addition the disk contains the latest version of the Includes. Even if you don't use C you will find these useful as they are full of helpful explanatory comments.

No serious developer should be without DevTools. Luckily

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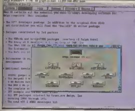


▲ Everything you've ever needed to develop software on the Amiga on one CD

Enforcer Mungwall and Sushi form a team that will keep your code on its toes and spot any nasty things it might be doing (this is what those MMU thingies are for). A new version of Enforcer will be of interest to seasoned developers though it would be even more interesting if the docs mentioned the new features.

Networking wise the disk contains the Envoy v2 developer kit from IAM the INET 225 dev kit and the SANA-II package plus developer kit.

CD developers will have a field day with the CD32 Native Developer Kit, there is nearly 4Mb of useful stuff here including tools for building CDs (if you have a Phillips CD521) CDXL and MPEG example source code a CD32 emulator for testing and lots more. Another interesting section is on guidelines for writing code that won't break on new (PPC) versions for the OS.

Several people have made contributions to the CD. Angela Schmidt has written a very useful program called Kiskometer to display what patch is what, so you can see what all those nasty little hacks you run actually patch. Ralph DOS Guru Babel has also contributed several tools showing how to accomplish several feats of DOS magic. The latest v43.3 Installer package is included as well with an updated license agreement dated May made addressable (regrettably) to Escom.

The CD doesn't skimp on IFFs either as there is large amount of IFF resources on the CD including lots of example source code and test files not just for pictures but a wide variety of IFF types. Many many IFF chunks are also fully documented from 8SVX to YUVN.

Minor problem

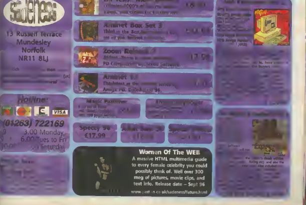
This disk is simply packed with superb stuff however I do have one bone to pick with it in that it would have been good to have a nicer front end for the documentation. Getting around the disk is OK as there is an AmigaGuide front end from which you can jump to any file on the disk. However I think that AmigaGuide just doesn't cut it anymore. I would have liked to have been able to quickly look through the documentation for what I'm after keeping bookmarks as I go. A list tree with all the topics in it for easy navigation would have been handy. Ideally some sort of search facility would have been best. For example it would be good to be able to type in copy and then view the Autodocs entries for functions starting with copy. Something like InfoView on the PC would have been useful and saved time. Anyone want to take up the challenge?

Excellent stuff

This minor niggle aside the CD is an invaluable resource to anyone who doesn't have the Native Developer Kit. Developers with all the old stuff will have most of the files already but the CD also has some worthwhile new stuff. It is also extremely convenient to have everything available unarchived all in one place. And at this price you can't afford not to get it ■

Paul Nolan

90 %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OK, SO WHAT HAS THE OFFICIALLY NUMBER ONE PD L[illegible]Y GOT A-HAPPENING THIS MONTH? WELL, WE START WITH AN APOLOGY WE HAD A MISPRINT ON OUR OFFICIAL AWARD, WE ARE (AT PD COMPANY OF THE YEAR 1996. SORRY EVERYONE WHO WROTE [illegible] TELL US AND THANKS AGAIN TO ALL THOSE THOUSANDS WHO VOTED US BEST BY A BIG MARGIN! ANYWAY, NOW THAT'S CLEARED UP (WITHOUT CREAM) WE'LL GET ON SHA[illegible] WE?

WELL WHAT ON EARTH [illegible] SINCE SLICED, ERR DISKS?

- THE LOWEST PD DES[illegible] LONG WAY (ANYWHERE [illegible] WITH 10 DISK[illegible]R 2.50, I DON'T THINK SO.
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- UNDENIABLY THE [illegible] CATDISK IN THE WORLD. THERE QUITE SIMP[illegible] A CATDISK THAT HAS [illegible]CH TIME SPE[illegible]T. SORRY BUT P[illegible]N WAS DEMANDE[illegible]DISK AND WE BELIEVE WE'VE GOT AS C[illegible]S IT'S POSSIBLE TO DO WITHOUT LOOKING [illegible]Y SMUG ALL YOUR LIF[illegible]
- MORE WORLDW[illegible] SWAPPING CONTACTS THAN YOU COULD IMA[illegible] COMES IN FROM DOZEN[illegible]TIONS ON [illegible] CONTINENT (EXCEP[illegible]CTICA, CURIOUSLY [illegible]EANS MORE EXCLUSIVE PD THAN YO[illegible] EVER SEEN. AND ALL AT 50P EH, I CAN'T IM[illegible]OW IT'S DONE [illegible]
- FRIENDLIER SE[illegible]E THAN YOU COULD EVER DARE TO EXPECT[illegible]S RETURN POLICY GU[illegible] AND TH[illegible] PROMISE.

OUR NORMAL P[illegible]S (WHEN WE'RE NOT PUTTING TOGETHER S[illegible]NE PACK OR OTHER THAT L[illegible]ANKRUP[illegible] ARE MEASLY PEASU[illegible]Y LOW, BUY THERE S[illegible]ING A BIT SPECIAL THIS MONTH, BUT 20 [illegible]S FROM US AT 50P EACH, AND, AND, YES [illegible]LL GIVE YOU 10 FREE ON TO[illegible] YOUR [illegible]LIMEY MISSUS! [illegible]CKS FOR 10 QUID. A[illegible]SKS OF YOUR CHOOSING TOO! 30P A DIS[illegible] M[illegible]EAVEN IN A SMALL JAM JAR TO[illegible] YOU AGREE

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AND OF COURSE, THE FIRST STEP [illegible]2 PALACE (TAK[illegible]H TURN OFF FROM THE M[illegible]THE CATDISKS. WHAT DO YOU WANT [illegible]CATDISK, COS IT'S LIKELY WE WILL HAVE INCORPORATED IT INTO THIS BALLISTIC LITTLE CO[illegible]ERFILLED BABY [illegible]00 LINES OF TEXT. IT W[illegible]MATICALLY DETECT WHAT MODEL OF [illegible] IN AND CHANGE AS IT BOOTS TO USE THE SYSTEM TO BEST EFFECT. HAVE A HD AND WANT TO [illegible]ALL BOTH DISKS T[illegible] PROBLEM, IT'S ONLY ONE MOU[illegible] QUICK AWAY, AS WELL AS ANOTH[illegible] REMOVE IT ALL TOO! DON'T HAVE A HD BUT WANT TO INSTALL IT TO RAM INSTEAD? NO PROBL[illegible] EITHER, OPTIONAL RA[illegible] ON FOR OVER 150% SPEED INCREASE, AND ALL IN 1.5 MEG O[illegible]P OR FAST). HAVE THE STANDARD 1 MEG AND WANT TO RUN IT COMBINED FROM RAM AND F[illegible]? NO PROBLEM EITHE[illegible] INSTALL CERTAIN [illegible]Y USED PARTS OF THE CAT FOR A [illegible]ASE IN SPEED. A MOUSE DRIVEN INTERFACE. ANIMATIONS, MUSIC PLUS STILL HI[illegible] GRAPHICS (EVEN ON AN [illegible]) HE HUMOUROU[illegible]NGS THAT WE ARE WELL KNOWN FOR. O[illegible] ASK FOR 1 FREE. YOU KNOW YOU WILL.

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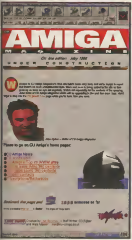

On line edition May 1996

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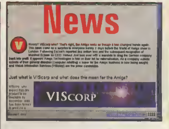

Just what is VIScorp and what does this mean for the Amiga?

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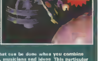
PD Scene

public domain

All the best of the latest free entertainment software is unearthed by Tony Horgan. Seems like the Aminet is the place to be this month for supplies.

Glow
demo

Demo of the Month



While some 3D demos seem rather pointless at times (lots of unnecessary tunnel sequences and strange tuneless music), this is an excellent example of what can be done when you combine top coders, artists, musicians and ideas. This particular combination have come up a rather excellent little demo. Although it loses a bit of direction half way through, it starts off with a realtime-generated 3D animation with stacks of glow effects and light sourcing. It gets quite abstract after that but still has plenty of tricks up its sleeve.

The soundtrack is pretty fab too, a dubby trip hop thing with some extreme frequencies (watch those ear drums and tweeters!). A very nice production that should restore your faith in the demo scene.

Available from: Aminet. Path: demo/aga/ tbl_glow.lha, tbl_glow2.lha, tbl_glow3.lha (3 files, 2.47Mb)

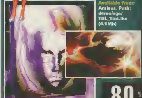
88 %

Tint
demo

What starts off as a fairly tame attempt to emulate the texture-mapping abilities of the PC and consoles eventually turns into quite an entertaining demo, in a laid back kind of a way. Some sections seem a bit on the pointless side especially when you've seen much better on the aforementioned platforms, but this demo is saved from damnation because in places it uses a good 3D engine to produce some interesting effects like a morphing head and reflective blobs that split into more blobs

These funky effects and other good parts of the demo are interspersed with the obligatory tunnels, semi-naked women, voxel landscape and Doom-type sections, and some rather excellent hand drawn pictures, backed with a couple of typical Euro-demo modules.

The requirements for this one are AGA with at least 3Mb of Fast RAM and a hard drive. Definitely worth a look if just for the 3D effects alone.

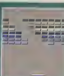


Available from: Aminet. Path: demo/aga/ TBL_Tint.lha (4.6Mb)

80 %

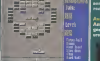
Mini Arcanoid

game



I suppose you've guessed what this one is already, even if they have spelt the name differently. So what's there to say about this? Obviously it's Arkanoid, the progression on Breakout that revived the whole bat and ball thing about ten years ago.

I wouldn't normally highlight a Breakout game but this one is particularly neat and works very nicely from the Workbench, so you can bring it up whenever you fancy without risking crashing any more serious projects that may be on the go at the same time. Definitely worth a look even if it's just for sentimental reasons alone.



Available from: Aminet. Path: game/wb/arcanoid.lha (91K)

78 %

You know where you can go

In the absence of anything particularly exciting from any other sources, all of this month's PD Scene software was sourced from the Aminet. You can obtain all of these using your FTP client software and following the paths given for each. Alternatively they are on the Aminet Set 3 CD-ROM set available from all good CD-ROM suppliers in this magazine. Finally for non-netted non CD-ROM users, you can call Your Choice PD on 0181 881 5994. They tell them what you want from Aminet and they can send it to you on floppy disks for a nominal fee.

By the way, if you're not netted up, you're missing out on a whole lot! Once you've hooked up you'll wonder how you ever got by without it.

Soi

music disk

TODAY'S MENU
LE FRRATH
LE WILD
LA CHEMIN-B
LE

There are four tunes on the menu of this music disk, presented by some mad chef with a big mouse-controlled finger. The first is a bit crap, but might find takers amongst fans of distorted overdriven drum loops and dodgy edits between loops. The second is a bit more normal, in a tuneless hard techno kind of a way. Number three is one of those tunes that you couldn't imagine coming from anything but your Amiga, while the final 'bonus' tune has a stab at a few melodies but never quite makes it.

Available from: Aminet. Path: demo/sound/soi.lha (433K)

60 %

Under the Hammer

demo

This one is a bit more moody than most demos and concentrates a little more on the slippery 2D kind of effects rather than going overboard on the 3D business. Most of it consists of twirly swirly patterns and strange scrolling backdrops (now there's a surprise) but there's also a Doomy bit and a ... sneeze ... spinning cube. At least you're congratulated when you reach the end and declared a 'real demo fan' for sticking it out! Worth a quick download.

Available from: Aminet. Path: demo/aga/ZaborUTH.lha (1 52Mb)

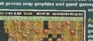
70 %

Boulderdash

game

This is an excellent copy of the classic C64 game of the same name. For the benefit of those who missed out first time around, Boulderdash is a variation on the Mr Do! theme with bigger scrolling levels that require increasing amounts of brainwork as well as joystick skills. Extreme care has obviously been taken to match up all the graphics, sound and gameplay with the original and the result looks sounds and feels just the same. The low-tech fx are identical, from the scratchy noise as you run through the mud through to the crunchy sound of the falling rocks and the high pitched pings of the gems. On the graphics side, the main sprite looks as if he's actually been ported from the original, with all the same expressions and those big eyes. You also get an editor included with the game so you can make up your own variations on the theme.

It doesn't look like much but it's one of those games that proves crap graphics and good gameplay can happily co-exist.



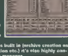
Available from Aminet. Path: game/jump/boulderdash.lha (963K)

90 %

PD Utilities

File management, music and art are the chef's special dishes of the day on this month's Public Domain utilities menu. Tony Horgan takes a bite out of each one and decides what's palatable and what's not before he chows down.

RO
file manager



Who knows what RD stands for? There doesn't seem to be any explanation in the documentation. What matters is that it's a compact but powerful file manager in style of Directory Opus. It uses Magic User Interface to handle the front end and alongside the usual functions built in (archive creation and extraction, file type recognition etc.) it's also highly configurable. If your current file manager doesn't cut it any more check this out.

Available from. Aminet. Path util/dir/RD v122.lha (334K)

80

SoundTracker Pro II 2.3
tracker

Utility of the Month

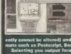
All of you who picked up the May 96 issue of CU Amiga Magazine will have already got your hands on v2.2 of this quick and dirty little tracker. This is a minor update which fixes a few bugs and adds a couple of extra features. You can now load in OctaMED modules with the finetune settings and portamento commands intact. A bug with the sample loop handler has also been fixed and you can now alter the screen colours from the standard 'butterscotch brown' shades.

Just in case you missed the cover disk version, I'll tell you it sports some excellent features including a very neat mod-to-sample converter, multiple loops within samples, a three band graphic equaliser in the sample editor and lots more. Highly recommended.

Available from Aminet. Path: mus/edit/pro2.lha (96K)

90%

AmiFIG 2.1
structured drawing



DTP and CAD users could find this useful. While it needs some work before it matches the standard of its commercial counterparts, AmiFIG has a good graphical interface and most of the features you would expect. Drawings can be output as AmiFIG projects, Amiga IFF (the scale of which apparently cannot be altered) and in a range of structured formats such as Postscript, Box, Epic, LaTeX, Pic and PicTeX.

Selecting you output format is a bit awkward. Instead of a window or cycle gadget you need to set arguments for use with a separate converter tool (which you copy to the C: drawer). This unregistered version is limited to saving a maximum of 80 components in any one drawing. Worth a look though.

Available from: Aminet. Path: gfx/edit/amifig.lha (224K)

79%

Image Desk 3.03
thumbnail creator

One way of sorting your graphics is to use something like Image Desk. it scans a specified destination of your hard drive and then makes up its own catalogue file of thumbnails. Via Image Desk it can be used to view the pictures in full and gain information on their format, size, colour depth and so on. File formats supported are IFF, GIF JPEG PCX BMP PCD PNM TARGA and any that you have datatypes for

Available from: Aminet. Path gfx/misc/ImageDesk303.lha (641K)

78

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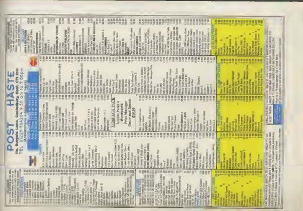
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CD AMIGA

Welcome to the only individual section of any Amiga magazine specifically for CD-ROM users. In here you'll find the latest CDs reviewed, a CD round-up and a guide to this month's spectacular cover CD. The Amiga CD-ROM market has virtually exploded in the last year and we've got a compendium of nearly 50 CDs reviewed over the last 10 months to prove it. As yet the amount of new software available is limited, with the market being dominated by picture, font, games and demo compilations, but many utilities like Photogenics and Personal Paint are now being released on the format. The CD-ROM scene is getting bigger and you can rely on us to cover all aspects, every month.

CD-ROM Scene

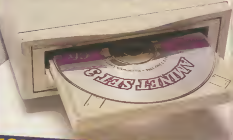
- Aminet Set 3
- Zoom 2
- Sound FX Sensation
- Oh yes ... More Worms
- Sound Library 2

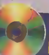
CDs of the year

A comprehensive listing of the CDs reviewed so far this year

What's on your cover CD?

All you need to know about your CU Super CD-ROM III



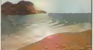


EXCLUSIVE NEW 7 PAGE CD-ROM GUIDE

CD-ROM Scene

Treat your CD drive to a selection of the best new discs. There's something for everyone this month.

Aminet Set 3



m Another mammoth four CD pack comes our way with the arrival of Aminet Set 3 The Aminet Set compilations are made up from all the new uploads to the Aminet on-line archives since the last set This one comes with a complete version of Imagine 4.0 OctaMED 5 and XiPaint 3.2 A flash on the cover also flags some commercial games but don't get too excited about these they're merely typical PD standard

As usual with the Aminet CDs the software on the disk is split into categories to make it easier to find what you're after There's also the usual search tool which will direct you to the relevant CD and will even direct you to software from other Aminet CDs if you wish Most of the shareware and PD software is included as LHA archives which can be unpacked viewed played or executed from the AmigaGuide indexes

With leading commercial software like Imagine 4.0 and OctaMED 5 included this looks like a particularly attractive set but with a price tag of almost £40 these additions are not really free extras (considering the rest of the software has been supplied to the compilers free of charge) But if you could pick two of the Amiga's most often used software packages it would probably be this pair so I shouldn't think there will be many complaints and all in all it offers the end user excellent value for money

Available from: most CD-ROM suppliers advertising in this magazine
Price: £39.99 plus P+P

90%

Zoom 2

The second edition of the Zoom CD comes filled with a variety of ready-to-run PD software spanning the range from games to utilities and anything else in between Opinions differ on the merits of compressed data CDs and ready-to-run discs but both can work very well

There seems to be no shortage of good software on this disc however it's a shame the compilers didn't snapshot all the icons properly before pressing it It can get very annoying that whenever you open a drawer you get the sub drawer names overlapping one another so you have to keep selecting Clean Up from the Workbench menu to see what's available

As is often the way with these CDs you'll find yourself having to reset as you browse through the contents and attempt to load software that either kills the system or simply gurus The range of software covers music (players trackers, modules and samples, many of which are the same as on the Sound FX CD also reviewed here) utilities (all sorts of stuff) programming (AMOS, Basic C Blitz Amiga E Assembly and misc) educational games (a big mixed bag) Business (mainly accounts and databases) text (various) graphics (converters icons 3D tools video titling clip art and utilities) slideshows (just two) Magic Workbench bits and bobs miscellaneous and demo of a forthcoming Get Started CD

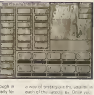
Despite the fairly regular mishaps with software not working properly (trying to write to the CD assigns not made etc) there is a lot here and plenty of variety

The software in each section tends to be good stuff rather than any old rubbish to fill it up If you want an accessible source of the best current PD software this is just the ticket

Available from: Epic Marketing, Victoria Centre,
138-139 Victoria Road,
Swindon, Wiltshire SN1 3BU
Tel: 01793 490988
Price: £19.99 plus £1 P+P

88%

Sound FX Sensation



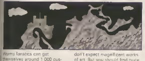
More [illegible] CD [illegible] way [illegible] peo ple [illegible] Marketing. [illegible] of the [illegible] boasts over 15 000 files. Most of these are 8-bit sound samples with the emphasis on sound effects although there are plenty of musical samples too. The best thing about the CD is the front end. Although in our tests it quit out regularly for no apparent reason it's useful as a way of testing out the sounds in each of the categories. Once you click on a category the first ten samples in that group are assigned to the function keys. You can then play any of them using the keyboard. The keys can be assigned to new samples with the use of a barely readable file requester (dark green on black colour scheme) although this often leads to a crash.

As for the samples themselves the quality is a little better than I had expected but there are still far too many poor samples filling up the disc. The law of averages suggests that there will be enough good quality sounds for most people but that rather depends on what you want the samples for. Musicians would do better going for an audio sample CD but anyone who needs sound effects for games and demos will find it very useful unless of course you have a similar CD already in which case you might find you've got many of these sounds.

Epic
Marketing/Victoria Centre,
138-139 Victoria Road,
Swindon, Wiltshire, SN1 3BU.
Tel: 01793 490988. Price:
£14.99 plus £1 P+P

78 %

Oh Yes ... More Worms!



Worms fanatics can get themselves around 1 000 custom levels and a few sound sample sets in one hit with this CD.

However compared to the lovingly crafted levels that come with the original game most of them on Oh Yes ... More Worms! are pretty shabby so don't expect magnificent works of art. But you should find quite a few that play just as well or better than the originals. The replacement samples are a bit thin on the ground. There are six alternative sets including the one we made up for our last cover CD.

In total the CD contains a whopping 66 Mb. Well there's no rule that says a CD has to be full to be worthwhile and this is reflected in the price.

Not a bad effort at all for dedicated Wormers but it's hardly inspirational though.

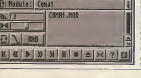
Available from: Available from. Epic Marketing,
Victoria Centre, 138-139
Victoria Road, Swindon,
Wiltshire, SN1 3BU.
Tel 01793 490988
Price £9 99 plus £1 P+P

65 %

Sound Library 2

Take one enormous archive of Amiga software let's say Aminet for example. Then unpack its modules section and put the whole lot onto a CD ROM with a load of module players. That's pretty much the story with Sound Library 2.

I know what you're thinking (I'm psychic didn't you know?) can't you get all that from a regular Aminet CD? Well yes it would seem you can although you probably don't get as many mods because Aminet CDs tend to accommodate lots of other types of software.



The bit about putting loads of players on the CD seems to have gone a bit wrong because the main player programs are missing from many of the players drawers. The mods are split into categories generally according to their style which makes it easy enough to find something if you're in the mood for a particular kind of tune.

A good idiot proof player front end would have been nice though most mod fans will already have their favourite player installed on their system anyway. So in a nutshell if you haven't already got your ultimate module CD ROM and you're not bothered about the pathetic players section of this disc this one is a candidate for your cash.

Available from: Epic Marketing, Victoria Centre,
138-139 Victoria Road,
Swindon, Wiltshire SN1 3BU.
Tel 01793 490888.
Price £14 99 plus £1 P+P

68 %

CD Amiga disc compendium

Here's a round up of the CD-ROMs we've covered in the last year. The good, the bad and the spectacularly good and bad. If you want a CD for your Amiga then check these out ...

1078 Weird Textures
89% *Ground Zero*
Why 1078? Who knows, but the textures on here (for use as backdrops) are all pretty nifty. It's not the most comprehensive collection ever but it's top quality.

3D GFX
91% *Peejay*
Creating your own objects for 3D rendering can be hard, so this disk was launched with lots ready for you to use.

AGA Experience
90% *sadENESS*
Packed with demos, slideshows and games this CD was one of the most up-to-date scene collections available on Amiga when first released. Over six months old now, but still good.

AGA Experience 2
89% *sadENESS*
This is another superb collection of top demos from all over the world. Like its predecessor it's uncompressed, so there's not as much on here as some other CDs, but it's still very good.

Aminet 8 (October 95)
92% *Available from most suppliers*
All the latest and best upgrades from Aminet as of October 95.

▼ If you want to find the best in the demo scene then AGA Experience 2 is just what you need

with a special theme of music modules. Superb stuff.

Aminet 9 (December 95)
90% *Available from most suppliers*
This CD's theme is graphics and there is certainly enough to keep most people happy. As usual all the material is from uploads to the gigantic Aminet site.

Aminet 10 (February 96)
90% *Available from most suppliers*
More wonderful selections from the Aminet collection.

Aminet 11 (April 96)
80% *Available from most suppliers*
See other Aminet reviews. Yet another definitive collection.

Aminet 12 (June 96)
91% *Available from most suppliers*
Er, as above. Very highly recommended indeed.

Arcade Classics Plus
84% *Epic Marketing*
An improved front end and PD versions of classic arcade games make this CD a top class act.

Artworx CD
69% *Weird Science*
A collection of hand drawn and ray traced images taken from demos and the public domain. Some of the material is pretty good but there are some very very dodgy pics too.

Assassins Ultimate Games Vol 2
80% *Active Software*
The Assassins are famous for their disk based PD game compilations and this is a CD packed with tons of them. Unfortunately many are extremely poor but the odd gem prevails.

C64 Sensations
40% *Epic marketing*
Nowhere near as good as Speccy Sensations, even though it's emulating a much better machine (the Commodore 64). Packed with music pics and demos but not many games.

C64 Sensations Volume 2
40% *Epic Marketing*
Where are all those games? This CD is an update of the original but manages to be just as limited.

Danny Amor's Online Library Volume 1
80% *GTI*
If you're into Dickens, Robert Louis Stephenson, Mark Twain, the CIA or the Bible then this online library with over 200 reference sources could be for you.

EMC Index
80% *EM Computergraphic*
CDs are a mass storage medium and as such it can be pretty difficult to locate what you're looking for on them. This provides a complete listing with thumbnails for 25 other graphics CDs.

Euroscene 2
88% *Almathera*
Packed with Euro demos in LHA and DMS archives. Euroscene is let down by a poor front end making access difficult. Some of the stuff is pretty good though.

F1 Licenceware Volume 1
60% *F1 Licenceware*
Licenceware is really cheap commercial software and this disc contains mainly games but also a few utilities and some educational software. There is also an adventure game creator.

Fresh Fish X
80% *PD Soft*
A collection of the famous Fred Fish disks on CD. Features business, comms, music, pictures, graphics and utilities. There are very few games and no demos.

Fresh Fonts Volume 2
90% *GTI*
Packed with fonts, fonts and more fonts. All of the fonts included on the CD are provided in a wide variety of formats, including DMF, Adobe and Truetype.

Light ROM 3
88% *Bittersoft*
Three CDs of objects and images for use with Vista, Real 3D, Cinema 4D and World Construction Set. An entire disc is dedicated to LightWave and one to Vista too.

LSD 3
90% *17 Bit Software*
Packed to the hilt with demos, all playable in a user friendly way straight from the disc. There is also an archived files section with more goodies and there are some utilities and games too.

Magic Workbench Enhancer
82% *Epic Marketing*
For those who want to tart up their Workbench, this disc of backdrops will provide plenty of material for a year or two. They all work with Magic Workbench.

Magic Publisher
88% *Available from most suppliers*
A massive collection of four CDs designed to be used for both traditional DTP and online publishing. Contains full programs, fonts, images and more.

Mods Anthology Volume 1
88% *Available from most suppliers*
If you're into music mods this is one CD you won't want to miss.

Movie Maker Volume 1 Special FX
89% *Epic Marketing*
This John Pasternak endorsed tutorial CD ROM is intended to give budding film directors and special effects artists a helping hand with hints and tips from the professionals.

Net News Offline
12% *Active Software*
Blatant shovelware straight from the IRCs and newsgroups at the

▲ CD-ROMs are an amazing resource for top class pictures Above 3D GFX

end of 1995 The news is old the opinions drag on You would be better off getting on-line for real

Nothing But GIFs

89% *17 Bit Software*

Lots of GIFs and top quality ones too They range from doodles to digitised images to fractals Worth a look

Nothing But Tetris

70% *Epic Marketing*

Once again the name says it all This is a collection of more tetris clones than you could ever care to play And indeed some of them are unplayable But there are plenty of good ones too

Phase 1

80% *EM Computergraphic*

Packed with clip art images and fonts for use with DTP packages and the like EM Computergraphic are experts in this area so you can expect something very good

Phase 2

89% *EM Computergraphic*

A comprehensive collection of mono IFF Colour IFF and EPS clip art files plus images in 16 256 colour and Ham-8 You also get PageStream support updates and ProDraw fonts

Phase 3

85% *EM Computergraphic*

Following on from the previous two Phase products EM Computergraphic pack another disk with very high quality images fonts and clip art Well worth a look if you're into DTP

Phase 4 – Desktop Video Dreams

89% *EM Computergraphic*

Unlike Phase 1 3 which are primarily for Desk Top Publishing users Phase 4 concentrates on material for Desk Top Video producers High quality control makes it a must for anyone considering branching into DTP

Scene Storm

51% *Active Software*

If you're into the demo scene then this disc is absolutely essential It is an easily accessible collection of the best from all over Europe and includes an MPEG player for AGA Amigas

Super Autos 94/95

70% *PD Soft*

112 Images of cars from a German motor show Not to everybody's cuppa but there are plenty of file formats and the quality of the pictures is excellent For motor fanatics

Texture Portfolio

51% *Ground Zero*

A collection of 24 bit textures and backdrops this CD is really enhanced by a book which is included containing a complete listing of what's on the disc Superb

The Colour Library 1

70% *PD Soft*

A disc full of images with a rather neat and fast picture viewer The quality of some of the images leaves something to be desired though

The Epic Collection

76% *Epic*

A large part of the well established Epic PD library compressed using DMS and archived onto one CD All of the software has to be de archived onto disk but the variety is good

The Fifth Dimension

86% *17 Bit Software*

This one is Packed with games demos utilities and graphics All files on The Fifth Dimension are packed in DMS form and have to be unarchived to disk Quality is excellent though

The Global Amiga Experience

89% *PD Soft*

Packed with demo versions of Image FX 2 0 Scala 1 13 Vista Pro1 0 Distant Suns 4 0 X Copy Clarissa 1 1 and many more utilities you won't go far wrong with this CD

The UFO Phenomenon

61% *17 Bit Software*

The Roswell incident and friends are covered in this CD released to coincide with X Files mania To be honest you'd need to be a bit of a fanatic to trawl through it especially all the text

Tools Unlimited Vol 1

70% *PD Soft*

This CD concentrates on screen blankers and suffers from this There's only so much you can do with one of these little numbers and while some of them are great there's really too much here

TurboCalc 2 1

66% *PD Soft*

A commercial spreadsheet program with an abundance of support files and several different language versions Its usability is enhanced by a powerful built-in programming language

Utilities Experience Volume 1

90% *sadENESS*

A fast class collection of utilities Includes emulators workbench utilities and business software

Workbench Add-on

84% *GTI*

Increase your productivity with this CD packed with comms utilities development tools etc Most of it is ready to run straight from the disk which is a major advantage

World Atlas

82% *WiseDome*

The kind of thing that CD has always promised us World Atlas is just what the title says with maps geographical and demographical details and more

Zero G Datafile 1

79% *Time and Space*

This is not an Amiga CD ROM but if you have a music package like OctaMED then you will have no problems using it Contains lots of top samples ■

Some useful contacts

Ground Zero
tel 01776 741462

Peejay
tel: 0181 888 3880

SadeN666
tel: 01283 722185

PD Soft
tel. 01702 306060

17 Bit Software
tel 01524 366982

Epic Marketing
tel 01793 490988

Bittersoft
tel· 01508 281468

Active Software
tel 01325 352260

Almathera
tel· 0161 6870040

F1 Licenceware
tel 01352 483560

GTI (Germany)
tel· +49 8171 85937

EM Computergraphic
tel 01708 642409

Weird Science
tel: 0116 234 0682

Time and Space
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KNOCK-OUT Man destruction derby, very addictive
DUNGEON HERO 3D Graphic adventure similar to DOOM
MORTAL KUMQUAT 3 Weird but fun beat-em-up
CODE NAME NANO Superb Thrust clone (NANO FLY 2)
MARIO MARKET V3 Get rich by buying shares. Great games
POKERMANIA If you like poker then this is for you
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X88	HOT BABE 3
X89	HOT BABE 4
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X105	ELLE MACPHERSON
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HARDWARE PROJECT

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What's on Super

What's in your drawers?

You'll notice that the CD is divided up into drawers. Here's a breakdown of what to expect in each of them.

Magazine. Easy Calc tutorial and Graphics Masterclass tutorial examples.

Workbench the items needed to get your CD up and running

Brian Lara September CU Amiga Magazine floppy disk demo of Brian Lara Cricket '96 demo. See page 12 for more information about the game and loading details

Graphics: a large directory containing graphics applications and images. You'll also find reader competition submissions, an excellent demo of the brand new German ArtEffect package, image processors, image converters and Animation packages.

Sadeness a Sadeness software special drawer containing previews of files of their excellent CD-ROMs: Utilities Experience Vol 1, AGA Experience volumes 1 and 2 and Graphics Experience Vol 1.

Sound: a large directory containing the readers competition modules, another brilliant collection of 8 and 16-bit samples specifically created for CUCD3. A new version of AlgoMusic, MIDI utilities and a whole host of excellent audio applications/tools

Misc: readers demos and utilities/applications sent in for the CUCD competition. There are also a variety of must-have tools such as the latest VirusZ, Executive (with bonus CUCD3 only utils), AmiCDFS2 and much more, including a comprehensive collection of ShapeShifter Macintosh emulation tools, Mac System 7.0.1 and the latest ShapeShifter 3.5. In addition, the entire Gnu 'GCC' C compiler package is included for die-hard programmers.

Games: contains commercial games demos such as Capital Punishment (see page 12 for playing details) in addition to shareware games such as the 43Mb FMV adventure 'Murder' and the excellent Doom clone Trapped. Readers' games sent in for the CUCD competition round off the collection.

NewIcons3. the NewIcons Version 3 package, a collection of Workbench backdrops and massive collection of NewIcons to suit.

Previews: four superb CD-ROM previews of commercial CD-ROMs reside in this drawer. Active Software Scene Storm demo collection and Daniel Armor's Blanker Collection, Colour Fountain colour fonts and the brilliant Workbench AddOn CD.

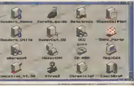
WWW: this special directory contains two World Wide Web browsers for use with the massive collection of Amiga related web sites included on CUCD3. For the first time these can be viewed without access to the Internet. The brand new revolutionary Internet software Miami is included to make getting on the Internet much more simple. Magic Web Maker is also included to make your own WWW pages

VistaLite. as on the floppy edition of CU Amiga, this drawer contains the full commercial Vista Pro Lite landscape creation package. As an added bonus, nearly 50Mb of Vista DEM files have been included.

Just look at how many quality packages we've got crammed onto CUCD3. Who'd have thought it possible? The best just got better.

Misc

There's way too much material in here to cover but the essentials include Executive 1.30, the new Amiga replacement task scheduler to improve multitasking. There's also some exclusive CUCD3 tools for Executive such as the new Dashboard from the forthcoming Executive 2.0 package. The Oberon V4 and Gnu C Compiler packages are provided for programmers looking for some good PD options. A collection of the best datatypes can be found as well as the Amiga's best CD-ROM file system, AmiCDFS, inside the CD-ROM drawer. ShapeShifter users, or would be ShapeShifter users, are catered for extremely well with the massive collection of SS utilities, SS boot file, the freely redistributable Macintosh System 7.0.1, some ShapeShifter FAQ files and of course the latest 3.5 version of ShapeShifter itself. Note, you'll need a Macintosh of your own to gain access to the ROM image necessary to run ShapeShifter on your Amiga. The latest 1.32 version of the capable anti-virus package VirusZ can be found here. Rounding all this off is the collection of readers Utilities and Demos for the CUCD3 competition, of which there's a great deal to check out.



Access all areas

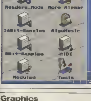
There are two ways of accessing this month's cover mounted Super CD-ROM III. The first is by booting the CD either in a CD32 or any other Amiga with a CD-ROM and suitable CD32 emulation. The second is by simply using the CD via Workbench by booting your own Workbench and then inserting CUCD3 in the CD-ROM. When the CUCD3 icon is clicked on, the 'root' window will open up containing many drawers representing the various genres of material on the CD. However, the first thing that needs doing if you did NOT boot from the CD is to click on the small 'Init CD' icon on the bottom right of the root window. This icon will activate the correct assigns to run much of the software on CUCD3 directly from the CD. It will also activate the brand new NewIcons 3 system exclusively released for CUCD3, see the NewIcons box on page 74.

CD-ROM III?

AMIGA
MAGAZINE
Super
CD-ROM III

Sound

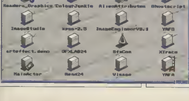
Here are all that [illegible] to listen to the [illegible] modules [illegible] Modules [illegible] on. There [illegible] so many [illegible] also [illegible] results. There [illegible] more [illegible] Aprimar modules [illegible] from the last CD [illegible] version of AlgoMusic w[illegible] with [illegible] and [illegible] to pump out audio generated music that actually sounds good. Inside the MIDI drawer is a brilliant program called UMPlay which acts as a MIDI slave and can play General MIDI instruments. There's also some MIDI songs to try it out with. Finally the Tools directory has many audio creative editing utilities including the 16 bit shareware Symphonie tracker.



Graphics

The graphics drawer on CUCD3 has a directory of readers graphics. These pictures can be viewed by simply clicking on the icons which will activate the ViewTek viewer. The picture viewer may cause problems on some Amigas with those it is better to use a picture viewer such as Visage supplied in the [illegible] drawer. Of course all the pictures can be [illegible] via a directory utility also.

The directory [illegible] or graphics [illegible] packages which will need to be installed [illegible] hard drive to work [illegible] Studio [illegible] Read the documentation [illegible] for a rundown of what they do.



Audio tracks

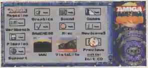
In addition to the 550Mb of Amiga software on CUCD3 there's also a special treat in the form of two audio tracks which can be played via your CD ROM or a standard audio CD player. The first track is a specially produced recording of the winner of the CUD3 Module competition. MainVein by William Morton, whilst originally an 8-bit module, has been specially remixed in 16-bit digital audio and cut direct to CD with no analogue stage. What this means is that the module can be heard in full CD quality 16-bit glory which is far better than a module player could hope to reproduce. Congratulations to William Morton who receives a copy of OctaMED Sound Studio, sample CDs and his own Gold CD of his modules.

The second audio track is also something special for CU Amiga Magazine readers. It's an audio recording of a 16-bit module created by our own Tony 'techno' Horgan in order to show off the capabilities of OctaMED Sound Studio and the 16-bit samples present on CUCD3. See the OctaMED SoundStudio review on page 48. The track is titled Never Enough and Dr Horgan advises you to crank it for the full experience.

Note: Some CD audio players can err and fail to mute the data track of CUCD3. For this reason ensure you do NOT play track 1 and skip directly to track 2 and 3.

A word about programs on CUCD

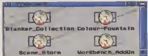
- As with CUCD2, there's so much material on CUCD3 that it would be folly to try and document every program. We have made sure every program is provided on the CD uncompressed and essentially ready to run unless otherwise stated. Most assigns and such forth will have been set up by Init CD but many programs expect to be installed on hard drive. If you experience any difficult running a program, read the documentation which is always provided with the program and try install the program to your own hard drive. This may be no more complex that simply dragging the drawer onto your hard drive or clicking on an install icon.
- Where readers material is included, there is also a .txt file of the same name to match each file which will have the authors information. You'll need to use a directory utility or toggle 'Show all files' to [illegible] these.
- Games in particular are often fussy about the specifics of your machine. Hardware modifications, location of libraries and even software utilities and patches running on [illegible] system will affect how they perform [illegible] refer to the documentation for [illegible] which have difficulty running on [illegible] Amiga. The Capital Punishment demo [illegible] example is an AGA game only and [illegible] virtually all your Amigas chip memory (2Mb). It can be run by booting the [illegible] and holding down the left mouse button [illegible] boot which will direct CUCD3 to [illegible] Capital Punishment and bypass the [illegible] screen. If booting the CD isn't practical the game can be run by booting with [illegible] startup sequence, this is detailed fully [illegible] ReadMe icon within the [illegible] drawer.


Amiga Magazine
Graphics
Sound
Games
Workbench
Misc
NewIcons3
Floppies
Support
WWW
VistaLite
Previews
Init CD

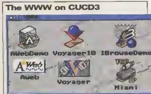
▲ What a stunning logo?

1755 00
- 427 00
EasyCalc_Tute
GraphicsMasterclass

▲ Amongst other there there's an EasyCalc tutorial for you to follow.


Blanker_Collection
Colour-Fountain
Scene_Storm
Workbench_AddOn

The WWW on CUCD3

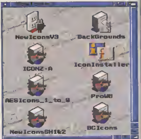

AWebDemo
Voyager10
IBrowseDemo
CUCDWWW
Aweb
Voyager
Miami
MWM

There are two HTML browsers provided here. The main difference is that one uses MUI and the other does not. Voyager, the MUI browser, will render the HTML more faithfully including backdrops and such forth. If you haven't got MUI installed you can either run it from the CD by clicking on the Init CD icon or install the latest MUI 3.3 on your own hard drive by clicking on the installer which you'll find in the MUI directory inside the Support drawer. Voyager will run from the CD but will often complain about CUCD3 being write-protected. This is because it tries to cache any images loaded. The best thing is to also install Voyager by opening the Voyager10 drawer and clicking install, you should also have installed MUI yourself. When either AWeb or Voyager is run, to load the HTML on CUCD select load local file and pick the following file:

CUCD3:WWW/CUCDWWW/index.html

If you're interested in the trials and tribulations that went into creating CUCD3, load the file Mat.readme from the root of the CD. There's no icon but you can view it with a text editor or viewer.

NewIcons


NewIconsV3
BackGrounds
ICONZ-A
IconInstaller
AESIcons_1_to_9
ProWB
NewIconsSH1&2
BCIcons

NewIcons isn't new, it's been around for some time but this new version 3, exclusively on CUCD3, has some extra features on the old systems. Firstly a brief explanation of what NewIcons are. Workbench icons have no palette of their own. That means if you don't have the palette installed for which the icons were designed they will look discoloured and occasionally downright ugly as in the case of MagicWB. An obvious enhancement would be if each icon could have its own palette which is free to look as it was intended no matter what palette is in use. This is what NewIcons does and the icon images are now stored compressed inside the icon tooltypes. That's not all, finally NewIcons 3 does away with Workbench's icon borders but this is selectable via a preferences tool. Images in the icon tooltypes has another advantage that if you are not running NewIcons you will see the original icon images if they are present.

This is the case with CUCD3 and to test this before clicking on the Init CD icon open up the Misc drawer. You'll see a mixture of standard and Iconographics icons. Now close that window, click on Init CD and open the Misc drawer again. Now you see the wonderful NewIcons. Be sure to read the documentation on NewIcons within the NewIcons3/NewIconsV3/ drawer. You might like to consider installing the NewIcons3 system on your own workbench from this same drawer. You'll find there's a myriad of NewIcons to pick from on the CD and the Iconographics IconInstaller utility has been moved into that directory to make updating your existing icons easier. Note: NewIcons will attempt to look their best given the available colours, complex icons will look best if the Workbench colour-depth is increased.

Competition winners

The standard of readers entries for the CUCD3 competition was very high so we're having a hard time deciding which ones have won. We've already picked a winner for the readers mod competition, the winners of the rest of the categories will be announced next month. Check them out and see which ones you think deserve to win.

AmigaWorkshop

Now we get to heart of the matter. This is the place where we explain, explore and examine all aspects of the Amiga. And there's a chance for you to air your views along with ours.

76 Art Gallery
We've got some stunning artwork lined up for you and those who have the CD edition of this issue will have it on disk too

81 Soundlab
Some pertinent questions are asked about multi-channel trackers as we delve deeper into the musical capabilities of the Amiga

86 Comms
The Net feature continues with how to make your own home page look pretty damned good

88 Net God
What scandal, gossip and intrigue has our undercover netcop unearthed for us this issue?

90 Masterclass
Now that we've kissed Arexx goodbye it's time to start a new series on the delights of the Workbench

92 FAQ
And your starter for ten, this month – what do the letters SCSI actually stand for? Find out this and more

98 Q&A
Even the best of technical wizards need a helping hand from time to time. Don't be shy, write in to the boys if you need some advice

100 Points of View
Alan tells us to get back into our bedrooms while Lisa gets on the case of who is handling Amiga warranties and a reader joins in too

102 Backchat
People are chirpy this month. The Internet FCI offer fan mail keeps pouring in and Amiga goods have been spotted on sale. Good news

Tutorials

78 Imagine 4.0
Getting things into shape using Imagine's Mould tool is easy and it's perfect for creating visually stunning images

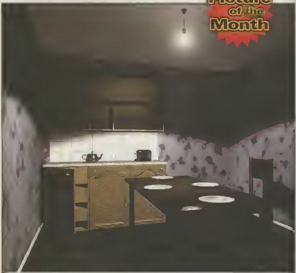
82 Easycalc
For the first in our series on last month's cover disk we've devised a quick and easy way of checking your lottery numbers against the winning ones to see if you've won

84 Graphics Masterclass
Turn to page 84 if you want to learn a few tricks for sprucing up your Workbench. Don't if you're happy with the boring grey tones you already have.

Art Gallery

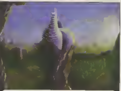
Some superb artwork for you this month and guess what, all these pictures and lots more are on this month's cover mounted CD-ROM.

Picture of the Month



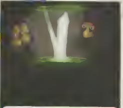
Artist Gaven Eogen, Trinity College Dublin (my old alma mater), Ireland
Amiga A1200, Blizzard III 50/50MHz accelerator 10Mb RAM, 200Mb HD Software LightWave 3.5

Artist: Malcolm Lavery, Cumbria
Amiga: n/a Software: LightWave



Artist: Dave Higton, no address supplied
Amiga: AGA Software: Photogenics, PPaint

Artist: Terja Karlsen, Norway
Amiga: see right Software: see right



Artist: Dave Higton, no address supplied
Amiga: AGA Software: Photogenics, PPaint

Artist: Malcolm Lavery, Cumbria
Amiga: n/a Software: LightWave

Artist: Terja Karlsen, Norway
Amiga: A1200, 4Mb RAM, FPU Software: Freeband, Imagine 3.0

Imagine Tutorial

PART 8

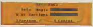
Bend it, shape it, twist it, anyway you like it. It's all possible thanks to Imagine 3's (CU Amiga Magazine cover disk January 96) Mold tool. And there's not a drop of penicillin or nasty green fungus in sight.

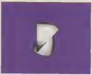
We touched upon the 'Mold' tool last month, as a way of creating interestingly shaped objects. Let's now look at the various Mold options in slightly more detail. Thankfully none of them deal with a greenish fungus, they control how a primitive shape can be warped into something a great deal more useful.

Using Mold is always done in the same way. First of all, in the Detail Editor, create and highlight an object. Then use the Mold menu option (from the Function menu) or press Amiga-E. This will bring up a list of the various options. Here they are in more detail.

Spin

Spin works differently from the first two effects and rotates an object around its Z axis. It's useful for creating complex shapes which are symmetrical. For example, think of a lathe creating objects from wood – this is how the spin tool works. The picture below is what we got when we choose a spin angle of 360.



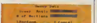


▲ Applying Spin to a square doesn't produce anything particularly interesting as it simply folds up around itself.

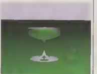
▲ Applying Spin to an outline object makes for a more interesting shape. Spin makes objects solid and isn't the best for glasses.

Sweep

Sweep looks like Spin but it keeps the object hollow so it is perfect for items such as glass es or bottles. Once you master this technique you'll use it again and again. Check out below to see how a Sweep angle of 360 produces dramatically different results to the spin effect with the same angle.



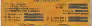
▲ Here is the glass object, this time using Sweep rather than Spin. It looks a lot better. 12 slices should be enough for most objects.



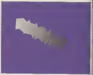
▲ Here is the same glass object, this time rendered in more detail with some attributes set.

Replicate

Replicate is very similar to Extrude except that the new object is not solid. Instead, multiple copies are created (five by default). This gives the effect of slices as you can see from the funny looking picture below.



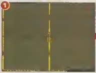
▲ Altering the scaling causes the slices to change in shape as they move away along the length of the original flat object.



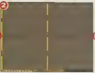
▲ If the rotation value is set, the slices can be made to spin and deform. Try this with solid shapes for bizarre linked chains of objects.

Making outline objects

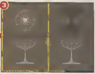
Here's how to make an outline object for use with Mold tools such as Spin and Sweep. You are effectively making an object from nothing so you have a large degree of control as to what the finished object will look like.



▲ **CREATE AN AXIS** Every object must have an Axis, so use the menu option ADD AXIS to create one



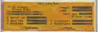
▲ **DRAW THE OUTLINE** Make sure the axis is selected and then pick Add Lines from the Mode Menu. Now draw out your outline



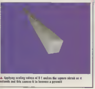
▲ **PROCESS THE OUTLINE** Change back to Pick Groups and the outline will appear. Now you can use Mold/Spin on it to create your object.

Extrude

Extrude will stretch out the object, creating a new solid. It has several options which can make a huge difference to how the new object appears. As we saw last month, the stretched component can follow a Path to create weird curved objects or it can stretch in a straight line Along Length. The rotation, scaling and translation settings define how the object should change over its length. Here are some examples.



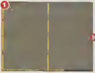
▲ Without rotation, scaling or translation the square plane will be a solid box. Switch off Phong shading to avoid the edges being curved.



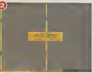
▲ Applying scaling values of 0.1 makes the square shrink as it extends and this causes it to become a pyramid

Sweeps with an edge

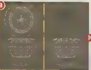
Here's how to make a shape which is hollow, but also has a thickness of its own. It looks rather like an inkwell or a small pot when it is finished.



▲ Create an axis and use Add lines to draw an outline. Make the outline double back on itself like this

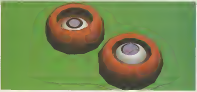


▲ Apply a Sweep (not a Spin) to loop the shape below. The default factor of 12 will suffice.



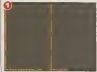
▲ The object will be created. Notice how it now has an edge which is quite thick and yet is still hollow

▲ Adjust the objects attributes and render. Here I have kept the Phong setting on to keep it smooth.



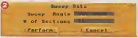
Halfway sweeps

Sometimes you don't need to make an object sweep round to become a closed shape. For example, here's how you could make up an Edam cheese with a nice big chunk missing.



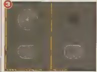
▲ Create an axis and sketch out the outline of the cheese

Apply a Sweep but this time alter the 360 setting to 280 ▶

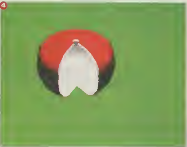


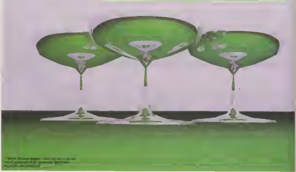
Sweep Data
Sweep Angle
# of Sections
Perform
Cancel

▼ Render the object. I created two objects, one white and one red to produce the cheese-like appearance. Neat!



▲ Notice how there is a gap in the object now





[illegible] Imagine's Mold tool here's one last [illegible] of the spectacular [illegible]

Sound Lab

Multi-channel trackers are here in force promising audio miracles from your Amiga, but are they all they're cracked up to be?

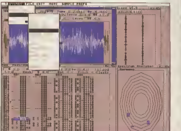
The four channel limit of the Amiga's sound chip has caused frustration for Amiga musicians almost since the first Amiga 1000 was released all those years ago. Now that more powerful processors are becoming the norm tracker programmers are at last finding new ways to overcome this limit.

Many years ago trackers such as Oktalyzer and OctaMED pioneered the technique of doubling up the four channels to make eight. Now there are others such as Symphonie and the new OctaMED SoundStudio offering almost limitless numbers of sample tracks, plus module players like HippoPlayer that offer playback from FastTracker (XM) and ScreamTracker (s3M) modules from the PC. Most of these feature special effects too, such as echoes, simulated reverb and various surround sound and stereo effects. But how do they work and are they the solution to all your audio problems?

An extra mixer

In essence a standard four channel tracker program is a fairly simple thing. During playback the notes and sample information are read in turn from each line of the module and then passed onto the Paula chip which makes the music using the Amiga's built in sample replay routines. However the new breed of multi channel tracker introduces an additional mixing stage. This is where all of the tracks are mixed together into a couple of stereo samples, complete with any panning and special effects processing, then passed onto the Paula chip as a pair of stereo samples to be replayed. Alternatively the combined stereo signal is passed onto a 16 bit sound card such as Toccata. You could even record straight to an 8-bit or 16-bit disk file, which would create a massive sound sample of the entire module which could then be used to master an audio CD.

The old style approach needs very little CPU power as it makes use of built-in hardware functions (which is why you can have a fast scrolling arcade game with a four channel sound track and no slow-down) but this new mixing method relies heavily on the CPU. This means that the sound quality of the final output will reply on the power of your CPU and also your selected output device.



▲ Symphonie is one of the new breed of trackers featuring a built-in software digital signal processor (DSP) which smashes the restrictions of four channels and offers features such as echoes and stereo panning.

Sound quality

Apart from whether you're outputting through an 8 or 16-bit device, the main factor that will govern the overall sound quality is the mixing frequency. In effect this is the sample rate of the final output sound, and as usual higher sample rates (mixing frequencies) will lead to higher fidelity output. Curiously, if you are using a video screen mode (PAL or NTSC) in conjunction with the Amiga's internal audio hardware, you will be limited to a replay rate of 28kHz, even though we at CU Amiga Magazine were under the impression that this limit was lifted with the introduction of AGA. With a fast processor (say a 50mHz 68030) and a Toccata card you should be able to output in 16-bit stereo at 48kHz. If you are using a hard disk file as the output you should also be able to run off a 16 bit stereo 48kHz (or preferable 44.1kHz for CD mastering) file whatever processor you have, because the mixing process will not need to be done in real time.

Side effects

There are a few side effects which should be expected. First of all there's the noise which is created and is especially noticeable with lower mixing frequencies. Part of this noise appears as an unpleasant ringing tone harmonic which can be heard in the background, the pitch of which is decided by the mixing frequency. Depending on the particular software you are using, and mainly the mixing frequency, you will also normally experience some loss or distortion of treble frequencies. This can be disguised using smoothing features but these can have the side effect of muting the overall output.

Finally there's the overall volume control. Depending on how many sample tracks you are using and how loud your samples are this should be adjusted (from the software not your amplifier) so that the samples are scaled properly during the mixing stage so as to give a good loud output (a high signal to noise ratio) without introducing clipping distortion due to excessively high scaling levels.

There are limits

To be frank, if you're limited to using these new features with the standard Amiga audio hardware the results will be marred by the noise and distortion that will creep into the sound.

However, if you have a 16-bit sound card (Toccata or Delfina for example) and a decent CPU then things are looking a lot better. You will find a review of OctaMED SoundStudio on page 48 this issue, which contains more specific details of the sound quality available with those two sound cards. ■

Tony Horgan

Easy Calc

AMIGA
Easy Calc 2.0
AMIGA

PART 1

It could be YOU. Devising a quick way to check if you've won the lottery is easy with last month's EasyCalc cover disk.

Lolloping lottery numbers if last month's cover disk program EasyCalc wasn't superb. As spreadsheets come on the Amiga they don't get much better. The problem with spreadsheets though is that they're not always the easiest applications to get the hang of. It's not just a question of knowing how those complicated cell functions work but understanding how to use them and how to plan a spreadsheet in advance.

At first glance you may think there's not a lot you can do with functions like IF and SUM but there is and this month's tutorial will hopefully show just how powerful they are. To show off these functions we're going to create a spreadsheet that instantly checks lottery numbers.

Nearly everyone plays the National Lottery and many people play more than one row each week (my second row won £10 last week!) and if you do play more than one row you'll know that checking the winning numbers against more than one row at a time is not easy. If you're in a syndicate with say six or more rows it can be quite time consuming. Thankfully this is just the kind of thing that spreadsheets are good at and once we've set EasyCalc up it takes seconds after entering the week's winning numbers to find out if you've won.

First steps

First we enter the key data: the week's winning numbers. These are entered in to cells A5 to F5 and the player's numbers, the guesses, can be found in cell range A9 to F9. To start off we'll only check one row of numbers, further rows can be added later. To keep things simple we'll also forget any formatting for the time being, using the minimum of explanatory notes on the sheet instead. Each week it's simply a matter of entering the winning numbers into cells A5 to F5 – the spreadsheet will figure out the rest.

Step 2 Now for the formula: there's one formula for every player number and this formula checks its corresponding number against all of the winning numbers previously entered. If it finds a match the number 1 is inserted into the cell, otherwise zero is placed in the cell – we'll use these results later. The formulae are placed in the cells directly below the player numbers – using EasyCalc's formatting commands we'll hide them later on. In screen shot number 2 you can see them in action with no correct numbers being found.

Step 3 (see formula) This is the real heart of the spreadsheet and it looks terrifying but

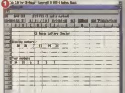
Return to sender

A key feature of EasyCalc is the return facility function. How it works is simple: spreadsheet functions carry out a mathematical function and return the value. This means that a calculation is worked out and then the result rather than the formula is shown in the cell. Functions then referring to that cell will see the result rather than the formula, making it possible to carry out calculations based on the result of other previous calculations. For example, the formula that figures out how many winning numbers are present in a row does this by adding up the 1s returned in the checking formula.

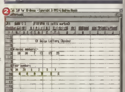
It's not just numbers that can be returned. Strings, ie text, can also be displayed. The formula that shows how many winning numbers are present displays a text message if there are no correct numbers found. Naturally, you can't carry out mathematical calculations on text messages, although there's no reason an IF function couldn't ask if the cell contains a message, ie

```
=@if g" "better luck nex
me","it contains a string"
contains a number)
```

①



②



③
```
=@(if(a9=a5,1,(@if(a9=b5,1,(@if(a9=c5,1,(@if(a9=d5,1,(@if(a9=e5,1,(@if(a9=f5,1,0)))))))))))
```

⑤
```
=@sum(A10:F10)
```

⑥
```
=@if(sum(a10:e10)=0," Better luck next week",@sum(a10:f10))
```

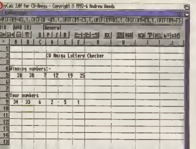
It's really very simple The IF function is made up of three parts a question and then two actions the first is carried out if the question is true the second if it is false The formula asks if the cell above it (a player number) matches the first winning entry if it does the number one is returned otherwise another IF is used to check the next winning number and so on See the panel Nested IFs for more details on this if you're interested

A stitch in time ...

Step 4 To save time retyping the formula afresh into cells B10 to F10 it can be copied and pasted Enter the formula into cell A10 select the cell and copy it using the menu option `Edit Copy` Now move to cell B10 and select menu `Edit Paste Absolute` This however is still checking the first player number in cell A9 so edit the cell adjusting all references of A9 to B9 Repeat this process for cells C10 D10 E10 and F10 changing the references to A9 to C9 D9 E9 and F9 as you go

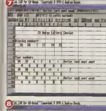
Step 5 (see formula) We've now got a spreadsheet that checks player numbers against the winning numbers but this doesn't tell us how many winning numbers we have By adding up the value of cells A10 to F10 (remembering our check formula returns a 1 for each matching number) we get the number of correct numbers in the row This also shows how it's important to think through the workings of a spreadsheet in advance Only by having the checking formula return 1 is it possible for the overall spreadsheet to work

4

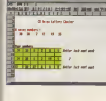


```
EasyCalc 2.0f for CU-Amiga - Copyright © 1992-6 Andrew Woods
=@IF(B9=A5,1,(@IF(B9=B5,1,(@IF(B9=C5,1,(@IF(B9=D5,1,(@IF(B9=E5,1,(@IF(B9=F5
B10   AN40 [R]      General
 1
 2               CU Amiga Lottery Checker
 3
 4 Winning numbers:-
 5   28   30    7   12   19   25
 6
 7
 8 Your numbers
 9   34   33    6    2    5    1
10
```

7



8



Step 6 (see formula) We've now got the basis of the spreadsheet but we can make it better By adding an IF statement to the formula in G9 it can be made to only display something if we have one or more winning entries As it stands now it will show zero as well which isn't much use Like the nested IFs used previously the IF statement shown here first asks if the sum of the cells is zero if it is then it returns a string a simple message – otherwise it shows the number of correct entries by adding them up again

Step 7 For syndicated groups it's a case of copying the player numbers and formula into subsequent rows and adjusting the formula references accordingly so each formula refers to the cells above it rather than A9 B9 etc You can add as many as you need And no matter how many lottery numbers you have once the week's winning numbers are entered EasyCalc instantly shows if you've won This is why spreadsheets are so useful as fast calculating engines

Step 8 Finally with all the formula in place we can use the colour controls Click on the menu `Edit Colour Set Text` and `Set Background` to make the sheet look like a real lottery sheet Set the text colour for the formula cells to the same as the background to hide them The Grid is also turned off and the `Worksheet Options Lines` menu command is used to add lines around the cells The lines function will add a vertical line to the left of a cell if one or a vertical column of cells are selected It will also add a line to the bottom of the cell if a horizontal row of cells are highlighted ■

Andy Leaning

Nested IFs

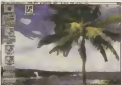
The formulae all used for our spreadsheet are called 'nested' formulae This means that arguments to functions don't just have to be numbers or cell references but can also be other functions The IF statements, as seen in step three, consist of a question, followed by actions to be carried out if the question answer is true or false. If the answer is true (ie a player's number matches a winning number) then 1 is returned, otherwise another IF used, repeating the process but comparing the current player number against the next winning number.

The first IF statement, for example, asks if A9=A5 the first winning number – if it does then 1 is returned, otherwise it asks if A9=B5 again returning 1 if true This continues comparing A9 with C5, D5, E5 returning 1 every time. Finally, the last winning number is checked, again returning 1 if true, if false however instead of another IF a zero is returned.

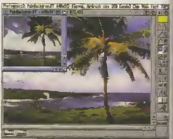
The IF function can also do more than just check if one number matches another Other mathematical tests can be applied, including greater than, less than and not equal to Try changing the spreadsheet so the formula for how many winning numbers are present only shows if there are three or more of them – ie a £10 win We'll print the solution for this next month.

Graphics Masterclass

Creating Workbench backdrops



▲ Do not adjust your set. This deliberately blurred backdrop was made from the original image (pictured right) with reduced colour depth and a smaller contrast range.


Photogenics2: PalmBackdrop.IFF 640x512 (Gamma, Airbrush size 20) (Lumin) Chip 966k Fast 70
PalmBackdrop.IFF : 640x512 87%,49%
Second

▲ Photogenics is great for stylising pictures for use as backdrops. This particular project involves making a blurred and posterised version of the same picture, then using the rub-texture option to affect one with the other.

Digital wallpaper doesn't have to be all dots and boxes. Give your Amiga the interior decor it deserves.

In the beginning there was a blue screen. Then Commodore had the notion that Amiga users would rather be irradiated with grey photons instead and so they released Workbench 2. While the original did allow the user to alter all four (count 'em) colours of the Workbench screen, release 2 brought with it the opportunity to have the windows and icons hovering over a pretty backdrop or pattern of the user's choice: nothing short of a historic step in 20th century computing history.

Since then we've been able to slap any picture onto the Workbench backdrop with a few simple selections from the Preferences. However, to reap the full benefits it's worth taking time out to decide just what you want from your backdrop. Well, that's obvious, isn't it – you want a nice picture to look at, don't you? Yes, but if you're going to be looking at this picture on and off for hours on end as you tinker away with your Amiga, you should try to find the most suitable picture, or better still create it yourself!

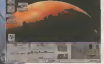
Fortunately choosing (or creating!) your Workbench backdrop is a lot more fun than spending Sunday afternoon trekking around the local DIY superstore.

Looking good

Unless you've got bags of memory and a nice fast CPU, it's odds on you'll want to use as few colours as possible in your backdrop image. A 256 colour Workbench will use more memory (particularly Chip RAM) and will be slower than one with two colours – but then who wants a two colour Workbench? So unless your system can afford the extravagance of a high resolution high colour backdrop you'll need to find some way of downgrading your backdrop without adversely affecting its quality.

Workbench will automatically perform a colour reduction process on backdrops that have more colours than the current Workbench screen, using dithering to disguise the loss of colours. If you have a JPEG datatype installed, try selecting a 24-bit JPEG image as a backdrop and see how it's dithered and rendered onto your Workbench. On a low colour Workbench the result is often rather messy, but you can get around this problem by carefully preparing your backdrop picture beforehand so that it looks

▲ You can always indulge in one of your hobbies like VW spotting for example. Even so it's still a good idea to re-colour you pictures to avoid too much eye strain



▲ Soothing space scenes are good for inspiring logical and philosophical thoughts (apparently)

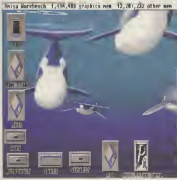
just as good in 64 colours as it does in 16 million

A few tricks

If your picture looks rubbish when you drop it to 64, 32 or even 16 colours then you could try using a stylised version instead. The examples here featuring a quaint country cottage and a tropical island scene were both created using the same technique. Photogenics was used in this case and the same effect could probably be achieved with other image processing software.

The source image for both examples was a 256 colour scan of a photograph. This was loaded into Photogenics and then blurred heavily with the defocus effect with the blur level set to six. This was then cloned, and the clone of the original was then processed with the posterise effect using a setting of two colour levels (which reduces the picture to a few areas of solid primary colours). This posterised version was copied to the secondary buffer. Finally the rub-texture effect was used to impose the contours and texture of the posterised version onto the blurred version.

This has the effect of reducing the amount of detail and contrast, but adds an interesting flavour to the picture at the same time. The picture is now made up of relatively few shades and could be displayed with little loss of fidelity on a low colour Workbench. This particular process also reduces the intensity of the brightest parts of the picture which is quite useful if you want to avoid eyestrain. It also makes it easier to see your windows and icons – a colourful and highly detailed backdrop can confuse things at times.



Top psychology

If you tend to use your Amiga for long periods of time you could give some thought to backdrops that will subconsciously induce moods and feelings to complement whatever it is you do with your Amiga. For example, for my own backdrop I rendered a tranquil underwater scene of a school of killer whales swimming into the murky distance. The reasoning behind this is that working on this magazine is a mighty hectic business but one that requires a lot of concentration and the nice whales help to keep me calm and sane (to a degree at least). The key elements here are tranquillity, depth (to make your computer room feel not so pokey) and the implied movement of the subjects away from the user rather than coming out of the screen. Landscape views do the job nicely.

However, you might want your backdrop to do something else for you. Perhaps you make 200 bpm hardcore techno and you want to get in the mood when you boot up – how about a picture of a speeding train coming at you out of the screen or an industrial jack hammer? For those heavy business sessions you could try a nice ordered graph paper pattern to get you into efficient home office mode, which you could easily make yourself using the pattern option rather than a picture backdrop. Got the idea? Oh by the way, feel free to send your favourite backdrops into us for inclusion on forthcoming CU Amiga CD ROMs. We might even award a roll of wallpaper to the best entry. ■

Tony Horgan

▲ (Left) Here is my Workbench with its moody sub-aqua scene. (Above) Here too with Photogenics ...

Wired World

PART 14

It's the little things in life that count, so with some help from HTML we can easily link up and add some extras to our home pages.

Last month we looked at how HTML can enable us to set up our own home page including images. This month we explore a bit more about how we can use these images in our pages. There's a few more useful tags that need to be covered yet in addition to the ones used last month though. With a little bit of clever HTML design, your document can develop a style of its own.

Pretty it up

There's no rule that says you must use images solely for diagrams and such forth. In-line graphics, as they are known, can be used as gadgets or links to add to the overall design. An example of this is the quotation mark on CU Amiga's WWW site. Here's the HTML code that we used to do it:

```
<H3><IMG WIDTH=25 height=20
SRC="genim/lquote.gif">This
intended acquisition  . <IMG
WIDTH=25 height=20
SRC="genim/rquote.gif"> <B>Bill
Buck-CEO VIScorp </B><BR> </H3>
```

In the above HTML code we've selected a nice headline font with the <H3> tag with a left quotation mark, which is a small 25 x 20 sized GIF to follow. Again we defined the WIDTH and HEIGHT to make the layout look far better for progressive loading browsers such as Netscape and IBrowse.

According to this particular HTML the text, unless told otherwise, will continue on after the included graphic so we need not use any special formatting tags for this example. After the text to be enclosed in quotes is finished the right quote image is included. This will most probably be wrapped on to the next line if the quoted text is larger than a line at this font size.

If this is to be successful, the size of the GIF will have to be smaller or match the font sized used. Otherwise there'll be a gap between the lines of text which looks messy. After our quote, bold is turned on with the <B> tag for the name of the quotes. This is of course terminated with </B> and the entire block terminated with the </H3> tag.

Wraparound

What happens if we want to wrap an entire body of text around an included picture that's wider than a single line? In this case we'll need to use some special formatting attributes, in this case 'ALIGN'. A very nice application of ALIGN is to use it embedded in an <IMG> tag like this:

```
<IMG ALIGN=left SRC="pic.gif">
```

This will align the picture to the left hand side of the page. This is not a big deal since it does this anyway if there was no preceding text. It does, however, have an additional effect in that any following text will continue to word wrap around the picture.

The second line won't jump to where the picture ends as with ALIGN=top, mid or bottom, it will continue to wrap. This creates a newspaper/magazine type impression of a picture embedded within a ream of text. The same will occur if ALIGN=right is used except the picture will be right justified with the text flowing on the left.

It's important to note that you can't change font sizes and include some more complex tags while the text is wrapping around the picture. Most browsers will jump to where the picture finishes before doing that.

So, how do you deliberately make the text not wrap around the picture but start after the picture? With the help of another special attribute in the form of CLEAR. An example would be <BR CLEAR=all> which would execute a return and clear the current justification. Any following text will be after the included inline graphic.

Linking up

We'll get onto some more complex image handling techniques later but first we'll look at the most important aspect of HTML, linking to other HTML documents. Linking HTML documents is the heart of the World Wide Web or WWW. This allows anyone to create a page of particular relevance to a topic which could be linked to other pages of a similar topic. This means someone who has successfully found one page of interest could very well find links to other pages on the same topic.

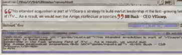
Linking can also be used to break up a lot of HTML into smaller pages. This is useful for HTML as documentation and disk magazines etc. For example, check out the massive HTML site on this month's CUCD III.

Using linking is quite simple, there's a special tag simply called <A>. Here's an example:

```
<A HREF="new.html">This is another
HTML document</A>
```

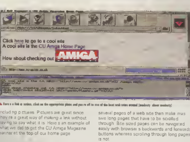
The HREF attribute specifies where the link will connect to. As with inline graphics and the SRC attribute, full path names can be specified including completely different sites. In this case, without the full http://address.com segment at the start browsers will assume it's on the current site in the same directory. The text in between the <A> tag and the term noted </A> tag will be highlighted. Normally it'll be red if you haven't been to that link before or blue if you have.

In this way any block of text from a word



66This intended acquisition is part of VIScorp's strategy to build market leadership in the fast-growing field of iTV... As a result, we would own the Amiga intellectual properties.99 Bill Buck - CEO VIScorp.

▲ Here's an example including pictures with no special justification. The quotes are small 25 x 20 images.



Click here to go to a cool site
A cool site is the CU Amiga Home Page

How about checking out

▲ Here's a link or notice, click on the appropriate place and you're off to one of the best web sites around (modesty, sheer modesty)

All this free space

For InternetFCI/CU Amiga 'TheNet' package users, there's one aspect of setting up your own WWW home page that we rather foolishly neglected to mention. You must notify InternetFCI that you want your free 512K of web space set up. Users of lesser platforms don't tend to use their WWW space, according to InternetFCI, but they report that the interest in WWW space on the Amiga side is much higher. So if you're just getting started on your WWW site, call InternetFCI on their new support number of 01273-763040 or Email them at support@hove.internetfci.com. If you're not already on the InternetFCI support mailing list, Email 'subscribe amigafci' in the body of an Email to listserv@cu-amiga.co.uk

to a whole [illegible] link in many diffe[illegible] methods:

```
Click <A HREF="new.html">here</A>
for another HTML document
```

Which will mean the word 'here' is just the link or:

```
A cool Amiga Magazine is <A
HREF="http://www.cu-amiga.co.uk">CU
Amiga Magazine</A>
```

Where the link is the description of where it is that it's going to.

Note in this example that the link would send the browser to a totally new site. Obviously there's not much point using http if the page is only on disk and not on the Internet. Text links are the most common type of link but you can put just about anything between the <A> and </A> that you link, including pictures. Pictures are great since they're a great way of making a link without having to say what it is. Here's an example of what we did to get the CU Amiga Magazine banner at the top of our home page:

```
<A HREF="http://www.cu-
amiga.co.uk"><IMG
SRC="cu_banner.gif"></A>
```

This line will include the picture cu_banner.gif but there'll be a red border around the picture indicating that it's a link. Clicking on the picture will again send the browser to the CU Amiga Magazine WWW site. Again if the browser has this site in its cache, the border will be blue instead. Sometimes this border effect can look messy if the included picture is transparent and isn't just a straight rectangle. In this case it's probably best to include the picture but not to make it a link and use a text link instead.

Some web sites make good use of images and links even within their own pages. For instance you could create a bank of buttons with images and turn these into links to navigate your own pages. It's far better to make several pages of a web site than make massive long pages that have to be scrolled through. Bite sized pages can be navigated easily with browser's backwards and forwards buttons whereas scrolling through long pages is not.

Finally there's always a possibility that the browser being used on your pages isn't a graphical browser. Something like ALynx on the Amiga is an example. It's your call if you support people using such browsers, but if you do it's important to note what changes you'll need to make to make image links and such forth usable for these people.

Firstly there's a handy attribute used in the <IMG> tag which will display some text if the picture is not loaded. This also looks good on some graphical browsers before the pictures appear. This is the ALT attribute and usage is simple:

```
<IMG ALT="A picture" SRC="picture.gif">
```

Now the text 'A picture' will be displayed in non-graphical browsers and even on some while the picture has yet to be loaded. This is also useful for button links like so:

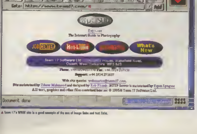
```
A cool magazine is <A
HREF="http://www.cu-amiga.co.uk>
<IMG ALT="CU Amiga Magazine"
SRC="cu_banner.gif"></A>
```

This example will display the name 'CU Amiga Magazine' if a non graphical browser is being used or if the picture is loaded. So far we've seen the simple <IMG> tag expand to some length to support progressive loading browsers with the WIDTH and HEIGHT attributes and now non graphical browsers with the ALT attribute. While this makes for long tags for simple images, I still recommend that you specify these each and every time you include a picture. Perhaps you could program a macro in your text editor to bring up an entire empty IMG tag like so:

```
<IMG WIDTH=x HEIGHT=y ALT="xxx"
SRC="xxx.gif">
```

OK, that's your lot for this month, we'll be back next issue with more from the world of the Internet. ■

Mat Bettinson



Exposure
The Internet Guide to Photography

Team 17 Software Ltd [illegible] House, Wakefield Road, Ossett, West Yorkshire WF5 9JS

Support: +44 1924 271637

Web site queries webmaster@team17.com.
Site maintained by Zaheer Mahmood and designed by Rob Plumb. HTTP Server is maintained by Espen Lyngaas
All text, graphics and other files contained here are © 1995/6 Team 17 Software Ltd.

Document done

▲ Team 17's WWW site is a good example of the use of image links and text links.

Net God speaks

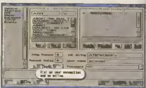
There is a God (besides myself). Why the sudden belief in HIS existence? Well, Holger Kruse has released Miami and it's even better than we thought it would be. Long have we suffered at the hands of AmiTCP which while an extremely competent TCP/IP stack is way too complex for its own good. Now, thanks to Miami anyone with no previous knowledge of the Internet can easily get online The initial [illegible] program, MiamiInit, is simple and can be set up within minutes. It's a single executable, you run it, press dial and you're on-line - outrageous! What's more, Holger's [illegible] the fastest PPP implementation yet seen on the Amiga

The net result, pardon the pun -), is that Miami is more compact, easier to set-up (understatement of the year) and with markedly better performance.

Miami is on sale in the UK for only £25 which is an unbelievably low sum for such a good program Holger, thank you NetGod is with you.

Surf's up!

Something big happened this month, something really BIG. It's so big that we've dedicated all of this page to it. Miami - come on down.



ATDT

```
ABORT "NO DIAL T
DIALNEXT "BUSY"
WAIT CONNECT
ABORT
DIALNEXT NO CAR
WAIT "login
SENDUSERID
WAIT "Password
```

Max Repeat 8

Repeat Delay 8

init string ATOFIEICIODO\r

User name

Password

Dial up your connection and go online

▲ Miami itself also has a GUI for the final points in configuration. All that's needed is to press the Online button and that's exactly what it does.

Miami release special

Miami the new MUI based TCP/IP stack from Holger Kruse has been released to the public to near universal acclaim Kruse a German national living in the US had been working on the project for nine months in between reading computer science at the University of Central Florida in Orlando

CU Amiga Magazine caught up Mr Kruse to ask him about more about this spectacular new release

Why did you decide to write a program such as Miami?

Because I got swamped with complaints about the difficulty of ppp device and AmiTCP I wanted to provide an easier solution

What do you say to the criticisms about the lack of SANA-2 network driver support?

"Miami was intended as a TCP/IP stack for modem dialup only This does not require SANA II In fact SANA II usually has disadvantages for SLIP/PPP connections In future versions of Miami will be extended to support more general types of Internet access (Ethernet etc) and then Miami will support SANA-II for those interfaces

What, if anything, will Miami offer over AmiTCP?

Miami is based on a more recent 4 4 version of the BSD networking code whereas AmiTCP is based on 4 3 Miami automatically reconnects after a loss of carrier and it provides better throughput under many circumstances

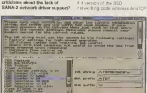
At the end of the day, everyone wants to know what difference would Miami make to the Amiga community?

I think it will allow many users to get onto the Internet who previously found AmiTCP too complicated to setup "

And is that a good thing? Many would argue that setting up a package like AmiTCP is a rite of passage and guarantees a base level of expertise

I don t agree with this The commercialisation of the Internet is making the Internet a mass media just like TV Other platforms (e g Win95 and Macintosh) allow easy Internet access as well so why shouldn t the Amiga?

So there you have it If you've not downloaded Miami from the Aminet yet, you can grab it from its own site at http //www nordicglobal.com/Miami.html ■



```
The init string must set the modem to the following settings:
- Factory settings for high-speed operation
- CD follows Carrier (not required, but useful)
- Ignore DTR (not required, but useful to avoid the line from
being dropped when rebooting)
- Hardware flow control on
- Software flow control off
```

```
TKR Fastlink
TKR BM-144VF+
TKR TriStar
Trust AEM14
Ucom Nordic 2814AR. V FC
USR Courier DS V 34
USR Courier V 32bis
USR Courier V 34
USR Sportster 14 400
USR Sportster V 34
USR Sportster VI V34+
Vaes FT2810 V 34
Well XT-2814SAM
X-Link 14.4A
```

init string ATOF1&C1&D0\r

dial prefix ATDT

dial suffix \r

▲ This is MiamiInit, the first port of call when installing Miami. It's all GUI driven and interrogates most of what it needs to know directly from the Internet provider.

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Masterclass

PART 1

Starting off a new series on the Workbench we take you on a guided tour of what all those funny-looking drawers do and are. Take your seats and prepare to be informed.

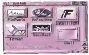
Masterclass

The Amiga Workbench is the core of the uniquely powerful operating system which is still running rings around other, bigger, bulkier platforms (no names – you know who you are!) However, this power doesn't come cheap and it can be quite confusing try to work out which part does which This month (and over the next few months) we'll take a look at the Workbench to discover the ins and outs

First, a global look to examine the more important aspects Here are some of the most important drawers which are on the Workbench You may see that your hard drive has an extra icon called 'Trash' The Trash icon is where you can put old files instead of deleting them – just in case you change your mind and decide you want them back (see the box out 'Removing the Trash') These two pages are a quick summary of what's in each drawer

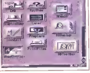
System

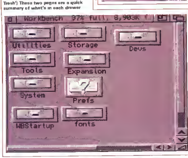
In this drawer you'll find the exceptionally useful Format command and a few other bits and bobs If your system is a mess like mine obviously is, you'll see another copy of RexxMast (oops ..!) NoFastMem switches off all non-Chip memory, and it's useful for ... OK, you got me there. There will also be some font control utilities and the Shell icon (which I use so often I usually leave out on the Workbench)


System
FixFonts
NoFastMem
Intellifont
Format
RexxMast
Shell

Tools

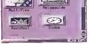
When is a Tool not a utility? Good question but here you'll find such delights as a pocket calculator, an icon editor, some hard disk utilities and some general printer control programs PrepCard is only of use if you have a PCMCIA RAM card, Lacer doesn't seem to achieve much and MEmacs is a fearsome text editor You'll also see another drawer called Commodities and in here you'll find utilities which add little tricks and hot-keys to the Workbench


Calculator
InitPrinter
Commodities
KeyShow
Lacer
IconEdit
PrepCard
PrintFiles
HDToolBox


Workbench 97% full, 8,903K
Utilities
Storage
Devs
Tools
Expansion
System
Prefs
WBStartup
fonts

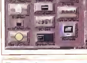
Utilities

There are some extremely useful programs in here RexxMast, for example, is the brains behind the ARexx scripting language Clock tells the time, AmigaGuide provides a hypertext help system and Multiview can display many different file types


MultiView
Amigaguide
RexxMast
Clock

WBStartUp

If you want a program to automatically start when you load Workbench, this is there you put it. As you can see I have one or two utilities which are started every time I boot up my Amiga.



Expansion

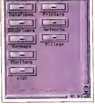
Sometimes, if you add a particular piece of hardware to your Amiga it will add some special programs into this drawer. Most of the time this isn't necessary, and so even on this heavily expanded A4000 there is nothing in this drawer.

Magic Icons

If you are looking at the screen shots and thinking 'Hey! My icons don't look like that!' there is a good reason. The icons on my Workbench were redefined by a utility called "Magic Workbench". Don't confuse Magic Workbench with Magic User Interface, which adds to the user interface with a new set gadget, Magic Workbench only consists of icons; although very nice ones they are too! An alternative to Magic Workbench is the utility New Icons, which works in a different way but achieves a similar result. Both packages are available for download from Aminet or bulletin boards, or can be purchased from PD Libraries on CD-ROM or floppy disk (Look at the adverts inside for Public Domain houses). Also check out graphics masterclass on page 82 for ideas on making pretty backdrops for your Workbench screen

Devs

All the Amiga devices hang out here. To an Amiga, a device could be a Datatype (a description of how to load a particular file format), a Keymap, a RAM disk, or the software required to drive a piece of hardware.



Removing the Trash

If, like me, you don't bother much with the Trash you can remove it, if you want to.

The problem is that it can only be removed by reformatting the hard drive and that means losing all the existing files stored on it. In other words, don't do this unless you know for sure you have a back-up of everything and that you know how to get the back-up back onto the hard disk.

To format a disk without a Trash icon, use the command:

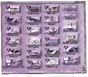
```
format drive hd0: name Workbench
quick ffs noicons
```

You should substitute the drive name of your disk for "hd0:" and the name of the partition for 'Workbench'. The command line option 'quick' means format the drive quickly, instead of doing it track by track. The 'ffs' means use the 'Fast File System' which is a slightly faster way of doing it and 'noicons' is the word which causes the Trash icon to be left out.

Please remember, doing this will delete all the information stored on the drive so make sure you have a back-up of everything otherwise you're in trouble as you will lose everything. I would advise that you think hard before deciding to do this and then exercise extreme caution if you decide to go ahead. (Headmaster mode off)

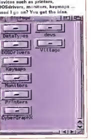
Prefs

This drawer contains all the sub-programs which control various aspects of how the Amiga behaves. Screenmodes, key repeat rates, character sets, colours, fonts, sounds and so on can all be adjusted from here. This window may contain a few more icons than a typical Prefs window.



Storage

Devices which are not currently being used (i.e. they aren't initiated at boot time) are kept in this drawer. They can then be instigated manually if required. Here, I'm storing devices such as printers, DOSdrivers, monitors, keymaps ... need I go on? You get the idea.



But there's more!

So you think that's it? Think again! If you go back to the main Workbench window and use the pull-down menu option 'Show All Files' you'll see a load more files and directories which were invisible because they didn't have associated icons. We'll look at this in more detail next month

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Everything you need to know about everyone's second favourite four letter word: SCSI.

■ **Q. What is SCSI?**

■ **A** Small Computer Systems Interface (SCSI) is a interface standard It's been going for a long time although SCSI2 and SCSI3 have updated it a little

■ **Q. I have a SCSI2 interface, do I have to use SCSI2 drives? What about SCSI drives?**

■ **A** SCSI2 is downwardly compatible with SCSI but not as fast

■ **Q. Why should I add a SCSI interface?**

■ **A** SCSI makes a lot of things possible such as hard drives (including large 9Gb drives) CD ROM drives and removable drives like the Zip EZ125 and Jaz drives Some flat bed scanners can work through SCSI much faster than parallel port interfaces) You can also have up to six SCSI peripherals connected at once unlike IDE

■ **Q. But I can add IDE hard drives to my A1200 and A4000 very easily — why should I go SCSI?**

■ **A** If you only want to use hard drives there is little point getting a SCSI interface IDE hard drives are extremely fast and relatively cheap (cheaper than SCSI drives of the same size for example)

■ **Q. Do I need a SCSI interface for CD-ROM drives then?**

■ **A** Strictly speaking no you dont Adding a SCSI CD-ROM drive to a SCSI interface (for example a Squirrel) is easy but its also possible to use the internal IDE interface by means of the ATAPI software/cable system

■ **Q. Is there anything which positively, absolutely requires SCSI?**

■ **A** Yes the removable hard drives (Zip etc) are currently only available in SCSI and IBM-PC Parallel Port formats The Parallel Port version will most definitely not operate with the Amiga Also the Siamese PC/Amiga hybrid system requires a SCSI interface

■ **Q. Is that it? Why is it still made then?**

■ **A** As far as desktop computers go SCSI hard drives are usually not necessary especially as IDE drives are now so fast However in the Big-Bad World SCSI drives are especially useful in Network server machines not least because of their speed SCSI hard drives are also available in special FAST and WIDE formats which means data can be shifted in 32 bit packets for yet more speed These drives are useful for high-end digital video and audio editing systems

■ **Q. What are AV drives?**

■ **A** A class of drive which is suitable for Audio Visual work This means they are very fast and that they should do without the auto-calibration which other drives do every so often

■ **Q. I have a hard drive connected to my A1200 via the PCMCIA slot. How can I connect a SCSI interface?**

■ **A** You cant connect two PCMCIA peripherals at once so this rules out the popular Squirrel and Surf Squirrel at once There are two methods to choose from at the moment Firstly a piece of hardware called the DataFlier SCSI rather cleverly adds a SCSI interface by adapting the internal IDE interface Secondly many A1200 accelerator cards will accept extra SCSI interface modules

■ **Q. What hardware do I need to add a SCSI hard drive to an Amiga with a SCSI interface?**

■ **A** If you have a big box Amiga then you can mount the SCSI hard drive inside the case and use a standard 50 way SCSI ribbon cable to connect everything If you have an A1200 with a SCSI interface youll need some way to mount and power the SCSI hard drive You can buy small cases especially designed to hold one or two drives or you could even make use of a small PC case Both these solutions usually come complete with power supplies You could also fit a CD-ROM drive into the case at the same time

■ **Q. What software do I need to add a SCSI hard drive to an Amiga with a SCSI interface?**

■ **A** Depending on the interface you should have received some utility software for partitioning and formatting the drive At the very least you should find that there is a new software device in the Amiga such as warpdrive device which you can then use with standard Amiga software such as HDToolBox

■ **Q. What hardware do I need to add a SCSI CD-ROM drive to an Amiga with a SCSI interface?**

■ **A** The same as for adding a hard drive

■ **Q. What software do I need to add a SCSI CD-ROM drive to an Amiga with a SCSI interface?**

■ **A** You don't need to format or partition a CD-ROM drive but you need software to enable the Amiga to read the disks Workbench 3 1 includes a CD-ROM FileSystem but there is also a package available from Ammet called AmiCD-ROM BlitterSoft also sell a commercial version which includes CD32 emulation

■ **Q. Can I connect any SCSI hardware to an Amiga fitted with a SCSI interface?**

■ **A** You can connect it but whether it will work is another matter There must be driving software available so exotic tape drives and flatbed scanners might seem a bargain but check that Amiga software is available first.

■ **Q. What is termination and do I need it?**

■ **A** SCSI peripherals are all connected in a chain with the SCSI interface at one end At the other end there must be termination to prevent corruption of the data The Terminator is a pack of resistors Most peripherals have built in termination which can be enabled or disabled by the addition or remova of a jumper or small resistor pack Only the end devices in the chain need to be terminated ■

John Kennedy

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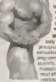

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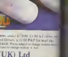

Performance 97%

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I wish I'd had a magazine like CU Amiga to write to when I had problems with my first Amiga.

So do I. God knows it's hard being the definitive guides to all things Amiga but, hey, that's what we're here for.

Cheap CD-ROM

A friend of mine who owns one of them silly PC things has just upgraded his CD ROM drive. He said that if I can use his old x2 speed drive with my Amiga 600 I can have it.

So would it be possible to connect it to my machine using the same procedure as fitting a 3.5 inch hard drive to my 2.5 inch IDE interface?

In one of his mags it says that I won't have any trouble but I thought I would ask you as well just to be on the safe side.

Philip Jarvis, Gwent

Yes, that should present no problem at all. You'll also need the ATAPI device driver, which is available from PD suppliers and the Aminet on-line archive. Check through the advertisement in this magazine for contacts.

Moon on a stick

The following is an excerpt from one very long letter. I unarchived your Imagine 3.0 cover disk just so that I could use the objects, textures, effects, etc with Imagine 2.0. But the lens flare and haze effect refuse to load on Imagine 2.0. Is there any way I can get these to work?

Do you have a full version of MUI complete with all the necessary libraries? If so could I send you some disks so you could copy it for me?

It's not that I don't want to pay for the full version because I could download it off a BBS but this way I wouldn't have to pay for the phone bill.

Finally, I own a 9600 bps modem but is there any possible way that I can get a better speed out of it?

Matthew Stacey, Terrington Nr Devon

No you can't use these effects in Imagine 2 because they were designed for Imagine 3.

As for us supplying you with a full MUI system, try elsewhere. And finally your modem, do yourself a favour and buy a new one.

New keyboard

I have a few questions that I would like answered. Please help?

1. My A600 keyboard is broken and I was wondering whether an A1200 keyboard would work with it as this will enable me to have a (much needed) number pad. If not, would you tell me how to fit a PC keyboard to my Amiga?

2. I am interested in the Internet but even after reading your bible there are still a few things that I am puzzled about, especially the WWW. Do you need to just have a program to access it or do you need to have an Internet site such as Demon?

3. I am thinking about buying a MIDI interface to use with my keyboard (Yamaha) which has two MIDI ports on the back (in and out). When I use this with OctaMED 5.04 will this enable me to use my keyboard instead of the Amiga one or does it just generate sound samples? Which MIDI interface would you advise me to get?

Jonathan Archer, Blackburn.

1. The ribbon connectors used on the A600 and A1200 keyboards are different so if only for that reason you can't just swap them over. You will need to contact a specialist Amiga repair centre to get a replacement or get it fixed.
2. To access the WWW you first need an account with an Internet service provider (the people who connect you to the Internet via a phone call) such as Demon or Internet FCI. Once you have access to the Internet you can use the WWW with some web browsing software, such as Voyager.
3. Once you have a MIDI interface you will be able to enter notes from your MIDI keyboard into OctaMED, so it will replace that function of your Amiga keyboard. Obviously it will not replace your Amiga keyboard in other non-musical applications. HiSoft do a good MIDI interface. Call them on 01525 718181

CD options

I have an A1200 with 4Mb of RAM and a 420Mb hard drive. I am thinking of buying a CD32 and linking it to my A1200. Are there any advantages or disadvantages of doing this rather than buying a proper CD-ROM drive?

If I do get a CD32 will I be able to use any of the Aminet CDs or any other major Amiga CD titles and finally what speed is the CD32? Will it be too slow for using any good software?

Martin Jerome, Herts

You'll be much better off getting a

proper CD drive, such as these offered by Power Computing and HiSoft. That way you can just plug in and go accessing the CD-ROM like any other drive.

The CD32 network option is OK if you have one sitting around, but it's a lot of hassle and the network will be slower and less flexible in use than a CD ROM that's connected via a Squirrel interface for example

The CD32 drive works at double speed, although some CD32-specific software makes it spin at single speed in order to read certain parts of the disc

PGA tour

I own an Amiga 1200 with a 120Mb hard disk a Hawk expansion card with a 2Mb Simm and FPU and a CD ROM drive

1 My CD-ROM drive has recently stopped working properly It will read data from the CD and when doing so it usually crashes the computer Sometimes though it works perfectly (with the same disc) Because of this I took it back to the shop and they said that the computer s power supply is too weak How can this be? The CD ROM has its own power supply

2 The sticker on my CD ROM says Zappo on the top of it yet all the software disks and manuals are for the Overdrive CD made by Archos Do I have the wrong software?

3 The eject function in the supplied software no longer works Why?

4 Is my Hawk expansion board PCMCIA friendly? Can I replace my existing 2Mb Simm with a larger 4Mb or 6Mb Simm?

5 Is my FPU compatible with the Blizzard accelerators? It has small pins coming out of the side

Duncan Strand, Leicester

1 This could be a power supply problem The combination of a hard drive and a RAM board is often too much for the A1200's inadequate PSU Try using the CD-ROM without the Hawk RAM board. If it works without the Hawk then it s probably a power thing although there could be an occasional PCMCIA conflict with your system

2 The Zappo and the Overdrive CD are basically the same units, only with different badges

3 We've no idea on that one It's probably best to contact whoever supplied with the software for help on this problem.

4 If your Hawk worked fine with your CD drive (before these problems) then evidently it is PCMCIA friendly Yes, you can replace your 2Mb Simm with a bigger one Check the jumpers' on the board which will probably need to be altered depending on the size of the new Simm

5 It sounds like a PLCC type FPU The Blizzard 1230 boards use PGA type FPUs, so it won't be compatible

Web voyages

I've just signed up on the Internet through Internet PCI with the offer in your magazine However Voyager seems to be quite slow with loading images when compared to my friend s P100 PC We both have the same modem speed I know that Voyager needs MUI and that this would slow things down quite a bit but even AWeb which is a little faster then Voyager cannot keep up

1. Is this due to my CPU speed?

2 If yes to question 1 then would fitting a PLCC FPU to my RAM board speed things up?

3 My RAM board has a socket for a crystal What is a crystal and what does it do?

4 Will the crystal speed things up even further?

5 What FPUs can be fitted to my RAM board?

Philip Law, Emsdeville

1 Yes It seems you have a RAM board with no accelerator, in which case (presuming you have an A1200) you are running on a 14MHz 68020 The Pentium P100 processor is much faster than this, so as you would expect, certain tasks take a lot longer on your system.

2 No An FPU would not be used for downloading and decoding pictures.

3 The crystal slot is for an FPU The crystal is used to set the running speed of the FPU

4 A crystal with no FPU will do zilch.

5 You don't state which RAM board you have Check with the manufacturer or supplier

Say you say me

At the moment I don't have a sampler and was wondering if I could use the speech synthesiser Say command from Workbench and then somehow sample the sound I've already had a go with AudioMaster and OctaMED 5 but so far with no success (I have an A1200/020 with a 250Mb hard drive) Please help?

Oliver Watton, Stalybridge

There's a small program available from the Aminet (also on Aminet Set 1 CD ROM) called Say2Raw which is supposed to do just that convert speech synthesis output into raw samples However, we never managed to get it working A1200 owners wanting to use the Say tool (which was not included with Workbench 3 0) can take the narrator device (devs), translator library (libs) and the Say tool (utilities) from a Workbench 2 disk and copy them to the corresponding parts of the A1200 Workbench

Upgrades

I bought a second hand Blizzard 1230 III with 50MHz FPU and [illegible] of RAM Is the SCSI kit for this board still available? The processor on the board is the EC030 but it says in the manual that I can upgrade to a full 68030 MMU 50MHz Where do I get one and how much will it cost? I need a CD-ROM drive! If I buy an internal one which has been made for a PC case how do I play audio CDs without a sound card connected to the drive? Or can you buy drives with phono connections and audio controls?

Andy Knaslle Bolton.

Gordon Harwood Computers (tel. 01773 836 781) are the offical distributors for the Blizzard range in the UK The SCSI add-on is available and they should be able to handle your CPU upgrade too. Call them for price details Most CD-ROM drives have phono audio jacks and a headphone socket with a volume control, so you can play music CDs straight through your hi fi or monitor speakers ■

Help is at hand

In response to the letter from Owen Brown in the July 1996 issue (GVP accelerator that plays up after an hour of use) the problems may not be due to any fault with the power supply or the GVP board but due to a bad connection between the board and the A1200 feature connector

I had a similar problem I even had the board tested and it checked out fine However I cleaned the feature connector and bent the board s connector pins and then inserted and removed the board a few times Since then I have had no trouble Give it a try it may save you some money

J Ettles, Lancashire

In reply to Owen Brown s letter I have had similar problems with my Blizzard accelerator I found a solution by installing a fan in the trap-door expansion slot as the problem was caused by the chip overheating and causing the computer to crash intermittently Also what would I need to do some home video titling on my Amiga?

Steve Harris, Cheshire

Thanks for these tips As for what you'll need for video titling, you can get hold of our March 1996 issue which came with the excellent VideoStage Pro cover disk (full program) Alternatively check out Scala. For more information call Scala UK on 01920 444294 You can output Amiga graphics straight to video, but if you want to add titles to an existing tape you'll need a genlock, which is a clever kind of video mixer Prices start at around £100 (see adverts inside the mag)

Send your Q&A problems to ...

You can send your technical problems [or answers – Ed] to CU Amiga by the following means:

By letter to Q&A CU Amiga, Priory Court 30-32 Farringdon Lane London, EC1R 3AU.

Email Q+A@cu Amiga.demon.co uk.

NO SAES PLEASE We regret that we can't respond to readers' questions by post or over the phone. Please do not include a stamped addressed envelope with your letters, as we simply don't have time to answer the thousands we receive Responses are only available through the pages of this magazine

Points of view

The trouble with bedrooms ...

> Now that software is becoming scarcer on Amiga the bedroom programmers are coming to the fore again.

By Alan Dykes

The trouble with your bedroom is that it's YOUR bedroom Unless you have a room mate wife or partner (or you get lucky a lot) there are not a lot of people who get to see the inside of this mysterious cavern and this can be bad for the Amiga

Bad for the Amiga? Have I gone off my trolley? Have I had one too many Robinson's Barley Waters (which incidentally has always made my chin itchy)? Nope I'm talking about bedroom software development It has long been acknowledged that the Amiga was a hotbed of software development and young talent And for many aspiring programmers and artists the bed that got hot was their own

Burns on beds fingers on keyboards monitors burning brightly into the early hours worried mums and goodbye girlfriends were all the hallmarks of the scene and many current stars are proud to admit that this was they way they started

Now that software is becoming scarcer on Amiga the bedroom programmers are coming to the fore again I'm actually using bedroom figuratively here too If someone produces software at home for PD or commercial gain but not for a large publishing company they are still part of the bedroom cottage industry You can do this for fun you can do it for gain you can do it for fame you can do it to get a job the software industry is still crying out for new talent but you should never do it without help

Get help

The guys who made it the guys who went from their bedroom to a smart house in the country and a flash car were all extremely talented but even they had help

Software publishers fulfil more than just a packaging marketing and money grabbing role Good software publishers will also whip a game into shape A big software house will assign a producer to a game someone with widespread experience on many games to help it reach a marketable exciting state

OK there has been a sea of crap from software publishers too in fact it's often the biggest who lose sight of what a game should be in their eagerness for a hit a month but having a decent producer is still one of the most important factors which contribute to a game's quality

I can produce a music track wh[illegible] know [illegible] what [illegible] commercially [illegible] I can cook a curry but not anywhere [illegible] the standard of the Raj Ta[illegible] down the road Why should someone who produces a passable piece of software by themselves expect it to be a commercial revelation? If you want it to be big if you want it [illegible] great you need help Help from someone who knows something about software and isn't afraid [illegible] what's what

Objective eyes

If you spend ages doing something you're bound to be blinkered You might think that what you've created is the best thing since sliced bread but it could just be a pile of poo So get advice from someone who isn't involved They don't have to be Martyn Brown or Jon Hare (though this sort of advice admittedly would be a definite advantage) they just have to know what they're talking about and the person who's programming has to be able to accept criticism and act upon it So get rid of the smelly socks shove those pizza cases under the bed and ask someone up to check out your game or utility But just make sure it's not your mum dad or your best friend ■

■ Alan Dykes is CU Amiga Magazine's Editor and enjoys a good game from time to time

A reader writes ...

By Tom Homer

Out of the games on my collection of 500 or so disks the only really good ones are Worms and Frontier. But what about Breathless, Alien Breed 3D and Gloom? I hear you ask. Well all of these are Doom clones. What if we want something new, something original? Something that is not a clone. Worms was an original idea and look how many copies that sold. If the software houses released some good, original material we might be going somewhere instead of trying to out Doom Doom.

But it's not just the software houses who need to buck their ideas up. Amiga Technologies and VIScorp could do something too, like advertising (now there's a novel idea). Look how many advertisements there are for Intel and if you buy an Intel processor you buy a PC. If the only advertisements in the public eye are for PCs how can the Amiga hope to sell? Word of mouth? I don't think so. The Amiga should be aimed at potential PC owners, not at those who would like a PC but can't afford one. "But it's not as good a games machine as the PC, it doesn't have its capabilities!" you cry. It would have if we had people willing to upgrade their machine to the latest, fastest technology. I'm fed up with A500/A600 owners writing to magazines to complain about cover disks which are AGA only or need 2Mb RAM. If the software houses continue to write games for A500 then we will get nowhere and stay there.

I've seen letters from A500 owners trying to make their Amigas as good as A1200s. How can I fit the AGA chipset? How can I fit more RAM? they ask. Buy An A1200, that's how.

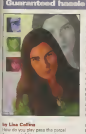
I always thought that shops were around to make money by selling things. This is obviously not the case (millennia of economic philosophy down the drain). At least not where Amiga is concerned. The only Amiga I've seen displayed recently was in a Silica shop in Hull – a badly adjusted and blank grey Workbench screen greeting customers. Really makes you want to buy one, doesn't it. Especially as it's sitting next to monitors showing off demos for Playstation? There was a man looking at the Amiga pack in the display case, looking closely, looking interested. Then he saw the grim monitor display and left the shop.

> **If the software houses continue to write games for A500 then we will get nowhere and stay there.**

What I want to say is that everyone must work together to make the Amiga a success. If it goes down the drain then you are going to have to spend loads more money on a PC anyway, so why didn't people just upgrade to the latest specification Amiga when they were available? Why don't they do so now. There are some very good deals. Don't just leave it up to the man in Bury St Edmunds (Lisa Collins, Points Of View, April 1996) to try and get the Amiga selling. Well done that man, you're one of the few who can actually say that they have done anything to help the Amiga. ■

■ Tom Homer is a CU Amiga Magazine reader and wishes to state that this is not only his opinion but also that of many of his friends and Amiga acquaintances too. He can be contacted at: TOM_HOMER@netnet.demon.co.uk.

Guaranteed hassle



by Lisa Collins

How do you play pass the parcel Amiga style? You put one player in America, one in Germany and the other in the UK. Then you spend the next couple of months tossing the Amiga back and forth until eventually everyone gets fed up and goes home, leaving the Amiga adrift in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean until someone else comes along and fishes it out.

Maybe things aren't as dire as that, but the question of who is actually responsible for any new Amigas sold has seen me telephoning around the globe trying to to find out.

In the midst of all the excitement over the VIScorp takeover there's been one important factor that has been overlooked: who is going to honour the one year warranty or take responsibility for any new Amiga bought? Or indeed for any current owners whose one year warranty is not yet up. This is particularly relevant now as there seems to have been a recent upsurge of new Amigas being bought. This is in part due to shops and catalogues selling Amigas at bargain prices. This is great news as it means there is a new glut of Amiga owners. However, judging by the amount of phonecalls we are receiving, these new owners don't know where to turn to for support if their Amiga is faulty.

To clarify matters I rang around some of the shops that were selling these new Amigas to see if they would honour the warranty. They said they would, but some of them didn't even know that VIScorp had bought the Amiga. This begs the question as to who do they intend returning any faulty Amigas to or who will they refer their customers queries to?

This is an appalling situation. I rang VIScorp to find out who is looking after matters on behalf of new A1200 owners. They said that Amiga Technologies still had the right to sell Amigas and would honour the one year warranty on any new Amiga sold. What a relief. However, as I already knew that calls to the now defunct UK AT would prove pointless (although a lot of new owners don't know this) I rang AT in Germany. They confirmed they would be honouring guarantees on any new Amigas bought. I was then given another number to ring to find out the contact number for the UK. I rang it and I was informed that in the UK a company called Digitec (tel: 01952 277 711) would handle any problems with these Amigas. I rang Digitec and they were very helpful and assured me that they would be honouring warranties on new Amigas in the UK. It's not an ideal situation but at least I now know what to tell people when they ring up for help after they too have spent the afternoon ringing around trying to find out who's looking after their warranty.

> **In the midst of all the excitement over the VIScorp takeover there's one important factor that has been overlooked.**

So, VIScorp own the Amiga but Amiga Technologies are ultimately responsible for new A1200s and in the UK it's Digitec who handle the queries. And the merry go-round continues apace. ■

■ Lisa Collins, is CU Amiga Magazine's Deputy Editor.

Backchat

People are happy, happy, this month. What's going on? The Internet FCI offer on the June issue has caused a warm glow in readers' hearts and there are reports of shops actually selling Amigas!!! Things are on the up.

The horse's mouth

I read Mr Dykes' comments in the points of view section (July 1996) with great pleasure. He said of the Amiga exactly what I have been saying to my friends when they ask me what computer console I would get and why. Every time I say that I'd get an A1200 or an A4000 Amiga, this is usually greeted with "but isn't an ST or a PC a better option?" Most people I talk to say that the Amiga is crap. This really annoys me because I have to keep repeating the good points of the Amiga over the ST/PC/Mac machines which is sometimes not as easy as it sounds.

I keep harping on about the friendly Operating System, Workbench, and how much easier it is to use than Windows software. For example, I used my dad's Pentium PC running Windows and within a couple of minutes I was confused, disorientated and generally let down. Using Workbench is a breeze compared with Windows; it has no nasty surprises like Windows which (thanks to the terrible online help) caused me to erase something I shouldn't have. I think technophobes would feel relaxed using Workbench, something VIScorp should keep in mind when they are advertising the new Amiga.

I bought my Amiga because it was a cheaper alternative to PCs and Macs; now I've learnt that the Amiga has one of the best operating systems in the world. I think that the Amiga has lots of surprises left even after all these years and it definitely outshines the consoles with its accessibility for programmers and musicians. I wholeheartedly agree with Alan Dykes and my friend is now considering buying an Amiga after I spoke to him. He was originally going to get a second hand ST to compose music with MIDI software but when I told him about Bars and Pipes and OctaMED and gave him a demonstration of the music packages I had he was impressed. So let that be a lesson to all those who think that the Amiga is at death's door. Even the A500 has what it takes to take on the big boys. Watch out Bill Gates.

Christopher Neil Hindley, Flintshire

A bit too hard

I think your magazine is by far the best on the market. I have bought it every month for the last three years and will continue to do so. The content is perfectly balanced and if I was asked to make one alteration it would be to gear the tutorials a bit more towards the novices out there. However I have one question – why do you advertise the issue to be released on a certain date but when I go to the shops it isn't there or isn't expected in for another week?

Mr F Bate, Cornwall

This letter arrived in just after last month's complaint that the tutorials were too easy! Well, you can't please all of the folk all of the time... We try to aim our tutorials at novices without patronising more experienced readers. As for the issue not appearing in shops on the due date (which is normally the 15th of every month), we don't know what has happened there as all the issues should appear in major retailers on the given date (sometimes even a little bit earlier). If you want to guarantee that you get a copy place a reserve order with your newsagent. We have passed on the details of the shops that you gave us to our circulation department. Be sure that the matter will be sorted shortly.

Do the right thing

After reading the points of view in the July issue, I had to write in. I have upgraded from an A600 to an A1200 using the Escom part exchange deal and have since added an Apollo 1230 accelerator with 4Mb of RAM and attached the Intrinsic Computer Systems multimedia station with quad speed CD ROM and a gigabyte hard drive.

I am wondering if I have done the right thing. Now I have been trying to buy some decent educational software for my eight year old to use and it is almost an impossibility. Alan Dykes said in his article that the Amiga still outshines the opposition. Maybe it does but no matter how good it is without the software to go with it, it can never realise its potential. I would like to see firms like E[illegible] supporting the Amiga again, possibly [illegible] the software on CD like the PCs and I would also like to see the Dorling Kindersley collection of educational software available on the Amiga. I think that there are many parents out there in Amiga world who feel the same. There must be over 500 CD educational titles available for the PC and that is not counting shareware, so is it any wonder that we are unsure if our loyalties are misplaced. Maybe the advertisers in your magazine could try and convince the software manufacturers that there is virtually untapped market out there.

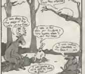
KR Hunt, Scunthorpe

You have a point there. However, there is some good news – a company called 10 out of 10 Software do an extensive range of educational software on the Amiga. You can contact their distributor Guildhall on 01302 890 000.

Songs of praise

I was connected up to the Net with another provider so I read through your Comms Bible and took a look at your Internet FCI offer with great interest (CU Amiga Magazine June 1996). After spending some time reading the book, it took me just about 30 seconds to decide that this was the new provider we were looking for since the one I was using at that time was at best average, at worst useless. For example, a typical conversation with them regarding problems would go like

THE FAR SIDE By GARY LARSON


I was just getting ready to cross the interstate
I was down by the edge of the lake at the time
I was in the den just finishing a new burrow when I got the news
I was looking for crawdads at my favorite pool
I was under a rock getting ready to shed

More facts of nature: All forest animals, to this very day, remember exactly where they were and what they were doing when they heard that Bambi's mother had been shot

this **"What is your problem?"**
"We can not get our mail down"
"What machine are you using?"
An Amiga A1200"
"Sorry I don't know anything about Amigas."
This was after trying and re-trying to get through for half an hour. However when I called Internet FCI it was a different story. When I first contacted them I got an answering service saying they would call me back – they did. Next they detailed what they offered and asked what type of computer and modem I had. I then sent my £20 to them, the next day a engineer called me to tell me everything was ready then proceeded to explain how to download the software needed and made sure that I had all the necessary instructions.

I then downloaded the software and installed it with ease. I connected to the Net fine, but when I tried again there was a problem, however as it was late in the evening I waited until the next day to call the support line. I was greeted by a very pleasant individual who listened to my problem, and immediately spotted the difficulty and enabled me to solve it in a matter of minutes. He then informed me that if I should have any problems whatsoever just to call and they would be there to solve them.

Well, all I can say is, this is the best service I have ever received, from the general enquiry about the services right through to problem solving. I will definitely be taking out permanent membership with them and recommending them to anyone interested in joining the Net. Thanks for a brilliant magazine and for introducing Internet FCI to me, an excellent choice.

Gerry Menzies, Emailand

I bring good news

Regarding the ongoing Amiga Quest saga (CU Amiga Magazine May 1996), I'm a reader who brings good news and I'm a female. In Eastbourne the Amiga has a smattering of just 10-20 titles on most high street shelves. However I've discovered a local shop, K RAM Computers, which has stacks of Amiga stuff there including new and secondhand games, loads of PD stuff, Amiga and accessories and as well as offering an advice service they do part exchange deals as well. The shop has recently relocated from the back streets to the high street so business must be good. This shop is a mini heaven and is keeping the Amiga alive and its supporters happy.

Cindy Wootton, East Sussex

More Net congrats

I am writing as I feel I have to congratulate you and offer my heartfelt thanks to all and particularly to Mat Bettinson. The reason for such an obviously fawning opener? The Internet package you have put together in collaboration with Frontier Communications.

For several months now, I have been following with growing interest your Wired World column. I have become fascinated with the Net and all it offers. I became very keen to get connected, but I was always put off by the horror stories of the complexities of configuring AmiTCP to establish a stable connection to this incredible resource despite my knowledge of computers and of my beloved Amiga. Then along came my saviours in the form of Mat and the team at CU Amiga. At last someone had had the foresight and common-sense to create an out-of-the-box, package for surfin' wannabes.

It is for this that I am so grateful. Well done, bloody good job! Thanks Mat for sitting down and taking the time to configure this amazingly complex system. You'll be pleased to know that your efforts were greatly appreciated by at least one reader. Your choice of software was good and I have effortlessly become involved in a whole new world, making new friends and instantly feeling a part of a much bigger community. We owe you one!

To my knowledge, this is the first time such a package has been put together for the Amiga, well apart from the much more primitive Demon installer.

You've broken new ground here and I'm sure that many more readers will be encouraged onto the net now that you've seen fit to make it so much easier for us.

It is only fitting that I also congratulate Frontier Communications for the part they have played. I have dealt with Gary Hall at FCI a couple of times since I opened my account and he has always been pleased to help. I have also had to call Technical Support once or twice and I was very pleased to speak to someone who obviously had considerable knowledge of the Amiga and the software package. My few problems have been very quickly and painlessly obliterated by the staff there.

So once again, well done, thank you and keep up the good work. With your help, I have entered a whole new dimension of my hobby and I can only urge other readers to follow suit.

Jonathan Hallin,
bluey@thenet.co.uk (Leeds)

A little something for you to chew on

There seems to be a lack of definition at the moment about what type of computer the Amiga actually is. The decline in interest in its gaming abilities and its different modern configurations has led to the Amiga being seen increasingly as merely another computer system in direct competition with the PC.

However, the Amiga's elegant OS design and effectiveness for serious software has never been particularly important in its success. The Amiga's largest selling machines have always been specialised for home computer users the vast majority of whom mainly want a computer for graphics-heavy uses, like games but who also want to be able to do basic word processing/art type things and maybe a little programming. By including specialised graphics and sound processors, cutting back on expensive CPUs and expansion ports and putting it all in an integrated unit that can be used without a monitor, the Amiga has traditionally been able to fulfil this purpose with a much better games power to price ratio than a PC business machine could ever manage and this has been its main selling point.

To use a motoring analogy, the Amiga could be compared to a car and the PC a large van, they'll both get you about but the van costs more and has practical capabilities in excess of what most people need.

Unfortunately some of the people most recently connected with the Amiga seem to have forgotten that what most home computers buyers want is basically a games console with a keyboard and have made plans for PC-like Amigas that include several expensive non-essential features. The, thankfully, deceased Walker discarded with the cheap one piece A1200 style unit and the specifications for the planned Amiga clone from Phase 5 seem particularly extravagant with video inputs, ISDN interfaces and other things that most people will never use.

Also the tendency to insist that graphics power is not important gives it an image of being an eternal bastion of cheap computing which is entirely untrue. The Amiga became popular as an expensive graphics dream machine, a status which was essential to its success, any new computer needs to represent a true leap in capabilities from established machines if it is to attract the owners and the software support that will keep it out of the plug-hole. There is a direct link between how impressive a home computer is upon its launch and how popular it subsequently becomes, while Commodore's 64 sold 15 million units by offering the graphics capability of mid 80s game consoles when late 70s ones were the standard, the CD32 was ignored because they were mediocre machines that couldn't do much that already popular machines could manage. The A500 did well but if its graphics capabilities were up to the standard of 16-bit consoles then perhaps all the Americans who held out for powerful PCs would have got one and it would have matched the C64's success.

Any designers of a new Amiga must not forget its valuable role as being a high tech games machine. The only way to make a successful home computer is to anticipate the next generation of computer graphics video from high density CD-ROMs, millions of polygons per second and with a compact and high value machine, get in there first. The survival of the machine depends on it.

Grant Sutcliffe, Lancashire

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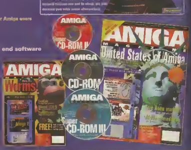

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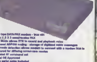

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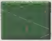

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